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ABSTRACT

A hearing before the oversight committee for the District of Columbia (D.C.) public schools provided the opportunity for several senators and educators to comment on the progress of educational reform in the District's public schools. The hearing was held at a time when the opening of the city's public schools was delayed because of their many safety and code violations. Representative Richard K. Armey spoke about the conditions in the D.C. schools and discussed the school choice legislation he has sponsored. Jeanne Allen, president of the Center for Education Reform, discussed charter schools and emphasized that the priorities of the public school system are not consistent with fundamental education reform. Nina Shokraii of the Heritage Foundation advocated vouchers to allow parents to send their children to schools of their choice. Kent B. Amos discussed a proposal to change the funding of charter schools in the District of Columbia. Bruce K. MacLaury, Chairman of the Emergency Transition Education Board of Trustees of the District of Columbia Public Schools, presented the views of the transitional board about the progress toward school reform in the city's schools and offered support for charter schools. General Julius W. Becton, Jr., the appointed Superintendent of Schools, discussed the condition of the schools in general and outlined some improvements made under his administration, focusing on the ongoing physical plant repairs. An appendix contains the District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997 and some supporting statements, including prepared remarks of those who testified at the hearing. (SLD)

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ED 430 062

S. Hrg. 105–364

# A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REFORMS IN D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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# HEARING

BEFORE THE

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OF THE

## COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

SEPTEMBER 8, 1997

Printed for the use of the Committee on Governmental Affairs

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# A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REFORMS IN D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1997

U.S. SENATE,
OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUBCOMMITTEE,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
*Washington, DC.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD-342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senator Brownback.

Staff Present: Ron Utt, Staff Director; and Esmerelda Amos, Chief Clerk, and Joyce Yamat, Professional Staff Member.

## OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BROWNBACK

Senator BROWNBACK. I call the hearing to order.

I would like to welcome everyone to our second hearing on the District of Columbia public schools. This hearing is timely as the 1997–98 school year will soon begin. The purpose of this hearing is to hear about the progress of the education reforms of the District's public schools.

The Subcommittee would like to revisit many of the issues that were raised in our last education hearing which was held on April 17 and hear about the progress made on these various reforms. We would also like to examine the issue of management in the District of Columbia public schools. There is definitely no shortage of improvement opportunities in management when it comes to the D.C. public schools. But the central office has implemented changes, and I am anxious to hear what improvements have been made and what we can expect in the upcoming school year.

I am also pleased to see that the charter school application process is underway. Since enactment of the charter school legislation in the last Congress, however, the District has only two charter schools. There is obviously plenty more to be done.

At our last D.C. education hearing, one idea that was raised was for D.C. public schools to take advantage of the resources of the Federal Government and the expertise, such as the Smithsonian museums. I am interested to see if the D.C. public schools are using these opportunities and if the Federal agencies are helping them to do that.

We just received this morning word that of the seven agencies in the Federal Government asked to help the District with establishing and working toward charter schools, only two have responded;

we need a lot more response and help from the Federal Government and the Federal agencies.

On the issue of school choice, I am a cosponsor of legislation, that is, S. 487—and we will hear about companion legislation from the House shortly—that would provide scholarships to low-income students who choose to get a quality education at a private school. Every child has a right to quality education. If they are being denied that right in their public schools, they must be given the option to make sure they receive the quality education they deserve. That is a fundamental and a paramount right. If people are to be able to experience the fullness of education and be able to make the most of themselves, they need to have access to a quality education. A bureaucracy may be able to wait years for its improvements to take place, but a child, however, cannot. They have to receive that quality education when they are in the school system.

In 2 years, first and second-graders learn the basics of reading and mathematics. We cannot put off learning basic reading and mathematics skills for those children. S. 847 would provide an immediate option to maintain these learning standards for children during the 2 years of improvement.

I would like to thank all of our witnesses for coming to testify at today's hearing, and I just want to say as well as I conclude my opening remarks that I am very concerned about where we are on District of Columbia public education. In the reconciliation bill that just went through Congress, we did a lot on improving the District of Columbia. We addressed the tax issue; we put in zero capital gains for property held for 5 years; first-time homebuyers. There has been a lot done on the crime issue in the District of Columbia. I think there is more that needs to take place. We need to address the management issue in the District of Columbia. There is a lot of consternation and concern, but there are a lot of needs to manage better in the District of Columbia.

I think some of the fundamentals are being addressed—of crime, of growth—but the one that we have not adequately addressed yet is education, public education. And that is my deep concern and commitment, that we need to move forward for the D.C. public schools for the children. They just are not getting the chance for the quality education that they need to have. That is what we want to examine at this hearing, and I have a number of questions for our witnesses, particularly for General Becton, on running the schools.

Our first witness is the Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, who has been following and working on this issue for some period of time, and I am delighted to have Representative Dick Armey here to testify.

Representative Armey, thank you for coming over to this side of the Hill and testifying. I look forward to your presentation and a few questions.

Please proceed.

## TESTIMONY OF HON. RICHARD K. ARMEY,[1] MAJORITY LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. ARMEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to be here, and I appreciate the fact that you are holding these hearings. I want to especially thank you for the opportunity to talk about the question of education in Washington, D.C.

As you know, I am a sponsor of school choice legislation for D.C., which will soon be taken up in our own body in the appropriations process. I have long been a supporter of the concept of choice for families in the education of their children. But I have to tell you that this current effort that I am working on has brought me into closer contact with the real families and the real children than I have been in other efforts.

And you are absolutely right when you put the emphasis as you do on the children. One of the things that I have learned in the last few days is that Washington is a city full of beautiful children, and every one of these children have a once-in-a-lifetime period in which they should and must get their education. It is so critical that we understand that for each individual child, it is now.

And as George Allen—a person that we in Dallas do not always quote—I mean Coach George Allen—used to say, "the future is now," and never is that more true than when you look into the face of a beautiful child looking for his or her chance to get through the third grade this year, because they know that this is the year to do so.

I would like to talk about that in some more personal terms without naming any names. I want to tell a true story about an African-American family living in Anacostia. Through the generosity of some anonymous donors, six children in this family began attending a Catholic school in the District of Columbia last week. Up until now, they had attended the city's public schools, and if they were still attending the city's public schools, they would not have been in school last week.

The oldest child is 13 and should be starting his freshman year in high school. Instead, he is starting the 7th grade. He has tested at the Catholic school and is actually only reading at about a 5th grade level. At 13 years old, this young man is already 4 years behind in school and on the verge of being a lifetime behind.

The next child is a 10-year-old girl. Although she tested half a grade level behind, the principal at the school agreed not to hold her back; last week, she began the 5th grade.

Also attending the Catholic school is a friendly 9-year-old boy. Until a few volunteers took him under their wings 6 months ago, this boy could not read. Halfway through the 3rd grade in D.C. public schools, he could barely read a word on a page. Because of volunteer help 2 or 3 days a week over the past 6 months, his reading level has improved to the 2nd grade level. Even though he should be attending the 4th grade, he will be repeating the 3rd grade. The principal only agreed to hold him back just one grade when provided with a firm commitment that the intensive tutoring would continue. And I must say I know the child and I know the tutors, and I know that they made a commitment that has been convincing to this principal.

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[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Armey appears in the Appendix on page 43.

Joining the young boy in 3rd grade will be his very bright 8-year-old sister, the only one of the six children who did not test behind. Also attending the school will be a 3-year-old and a 4-year-old.

If you will, I would like to take a moment to talk about the future of these children. The young man repeating the 3rd grade is an extremely kind and friendly child, but what will his future look like if he continues to go to school and continues to fall behind? He would become bored in class and begin to disturb the other students. His self-esteem would deteriorate, and eventually, he would conclude that he cannot compete in school. Unable to read, he would drop out. In today's economy, what future would this young man have?

Fortunately, these six children are now attending a school that has an excellent record of success. Most of the students who graduate from this elementary school go on to succeed in a private high school, and from there, most go on to college. Their new school is already producing results. Attitudes have changed, both among the children and their parents. The children are more excited to learn, and their parents are more engaged in the children's education. Because of the opportunity they have been given, these precious children are now going to become something more than just statistics.

Mr. Chairman, some people may listen to me and complain that I am guilty of argument by anecdote. Let us look at the facts and see if the family that I have just discussed is representative of what is really happening in our Nation's Capital.

In the family I mentioned, of the four children who are beyond kindergarten age, three of the four test below grade level. According to *The Washington Post,* among D.C. public students as a whole, 65 percent test below their grade level. In 1974, 72 percent of 4th graders in D.C. public schools tested below basic proficiency on the National Assessment of Education Progress. Even many students who graduate have little to show for their diplomas. Eighty-five percent of D.C. public schools students who enter the University of the District of Columbia need 2 years of remedial education before beginning their course work toward their degree. A majority of public school graduates who take the U.S. Armed Forces qualification test fail it.

What is worse, about 40 percent of District children who enter the public schools never graduate at all. Unable to compete in our economy, many end up on welfare or in prison. A report released in August showed that at any given time, virtually half of all black men in Washington, D.C. age 18 to 35 are either incarcerated, on parole or on probation, awaiting trial or being sought on an arrest warrant.

We simply cannot continue to allow our young people to become nothing other than grim statistics. I have supported efforts to improve the public schools in the District. I have met with General Becton, and I believe he is committed to a genuine reforming and improvement of the public schools. I support the strong charter school law created by Congress which allows for creative and successful charter schools.

I might also add that even though per pupil spending levels are already among the highest in the Nation, Congress has nevertheless provided more funding for the public school system. But we need to do more. We must do something to help the thousands of children like the ones I have described today whose future depends on getting out of failing schools, not in 10 years, not in 5 years, but today.

That is why I have introduced bipartisan legislation that would provide Opportunity Scholarships to low-income District residents. Under the legislation, which was introduced in the Senate by Senators Coats, Lieberman and the Chairman of this Subcommittee, about 2,000 children would be eligible for a scholarship of up to $3,200. The scholarship could be used to attend the public, private, or religious school of the parents' choosing; it would also provide up to $500 in tutoring assistance to about 2,000 public school students.

Not only will the scholarships give 2,000 children a chance to attend a better school immediately; they will also help improve the public schools. The only way the public school bureaucracy will be reformed is through the discipline and accountability that competition will provide.

Let me quote Howard Fuller, the former superintendent of Milwaukee's public schools: "If you are in a system, as I was as a superintendent, demanding change, but everyone there is clear that whether a single child learns or not, everyone is going to get paid, if everybody is clear that in schools that have never educated kids, each year you are going to put more kids in there, there is not one single thing I can do about it, and all the rhetoric in the world is not going to change that. What I am saying is simply this, I think you have to have a series of options for parents. I support charter schools. I support site-based management—that is, real site-based management. I support anything that changes the options for parents. But I am here to say that if one of these options is not choice that gives poor parents a way to leave, the kind of pressure that you need internally is simply not going to occur."

Mr. Chairman, in suburban neighborhoods, some pressures for positive change exist because middle-class families have the resources to take their children out of bad schools and put them into private school. Thus, in a limited but important way, public schools are forced to compete for students. As a result, they frequently overcome bureaucratic inertia and improve.

According to a recent *Washington Post* article, a Bethesda public school strengthened its curriculum in order to woo back to the public schools private school students searching for a rigorous education experience. This is the dynamic we must create in Anacostia.

I would like to address two concerns that have been raised about my legislation. Some critics of the legislation argue that the only students that private schools are interested in taking are the brightest and the most privileged—not the low-income students who are eligible for scholarships under the bill.

A similar strain of this argument is that private schools, if they would accept poor children, would take only the brightest students and leave the public schools with the students who have the greatest need. It is true that some exclusive schools like Sidwell Friends, where the President sent his child, only accept the best and the brightest; but under our legislation, the scholarships are awarded randomly to parents and students, not to the schools. Parents have the power to choose, not the schools. Parents can cherrypick the best schools, not the other way around.

Most importantly, this argument ignores what is really happening in this city—the six children from the family I mentioned earlier in my testimony were all accepted by a Catholic school in Anacostia, even though most are testing below grade level. I went to visit Holy Redeemer Catholic School, which is located near North Capitol Street. This school is serving the same low-income minority student population as attend the public schools. The same is true for the Nanny Helen Burroughs School that Senators Coats and Lieberman visited. These schools are not exclusives. They are not institutions in the posh neighborhoods of Northwest Washington. I challenge school choice opponents to look beyond the schools where they are sending their own children and look to the dozens of schools in poor neighborhoods that are currently serving low-income, primarily African-American students. The entire mission of these schools is to serve the disadvantaged students who live in the poor neighborhoods in which they are located.

Moreover, low-income students are already attending more than 60 area schools through scholarships provided by the Washington Scholarship Fund. In fact, many of Washington's most exclusive private schools have accepted poor students who are eligible for the scholarships. The Washington Scholarship Fund, which currently serves about 250 children, has a waiting list of several hundred children. The waiting list of the Washington Scholarship Fund leads me to another concern I hear expressed about the scholarship legislation—whether Congress would infringe on the District's home rule by providing opportunity scholarships.

The number of children on the Washington Scholarship Fund's waiting list demonstrates that the people of Washington, D.C. themselves want alternatives to the failing public schools. That support is reflected in the polling data. A recent poll shows that by a 44 to 31 margin, District residents believe that providing scholarships to low-income children is a good use of taxpayer dollars. Among families earning less than $25,000, 59 percent support the program, while just 17 percent oppose it. African-Americans support the idea by a 48 to 29 margin. Opposition to scholarships is highest among families who earn $60,000 or more, most of whom already send their children to private schools.

Mr. Chairman, let me close by returning to the family I discussed at the opening of my statement. A child who goes through school without learning has the odds stacked against him. Most children who go through school without learning become grim statistics. We cannot stand by and let that happen to another generation of children in our Nation's Capitol. Every child in America deserves a safe, quality education and a fair chance at the American dream.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me just make a final personal observation. As you know, my home is in Dallas, Texas. I do not live in Washington, D.C. I have never lived in Washington, D.C. I will never live in Washington, D.C. My grandchildren will not be raised in Washington, DC.

You could ask why do I trouble myself over this question. And I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, it is not out of a concern for Washington, D.C. But Washington, D.C. is a city that has many very, very beautiful and very precious children, and it is just simply not something to be ignored. Each and every one of us who has the privilege of working in this city must be willing to look into this city and at least look into the eyes of these children, and anybody who works on this Hill, in this town, who looks into those beautiful brown eyes and can say something other than, "You must have your chance now; you cannot be ignored until a system reforms itself; you cannot be allowed to be passed over by a system slow in reforming itself," is failing in his or her duty to those children.

And I must say that I believe that our duty to those children is larger than our duty to this city or to our own home cities, wherever they are. And it is, in fact, I think, the closest thing to a moral imperative that any of us face in this town.

I would invite anybody who thinks that somehow or another, the system may be troubled by this kind of an initiative to look beyond the system and to go and look into one of these children's eyes. And if you can get by that little 3rd-grader who happened to be in my office the other day, and if you can spend half an hour with that little guy, and you can come away without him owning you in some way, then your heart is too cold to work in this city or anyplace else.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, Mr. Armey. I appreciate very much your testifying and being here today.

It seems to me it is about the children, and it is also about making Washington, D.C. a shining example, which is what we are trying to do for it and for the children who go to school here.

Let me ask you, I guess, the most obvious of questions. Why is it that with the number of Members of Congress who send their children to private schools and have the income and the wherewithal to do that, with the statistics you cited of the failings of this system toward the children, and with the advantages of these scholarships and the bipartisan support for this—as you noted, Senator Lieberman, who is also on this panel, introduced the same companion legislation—why is there resistance to either these scholarships or even to the concept of vouchers? It seems to me that the whole situation would say that this is the clear answer and the way that we need to go.

Mr. ARMEY. Well, I am frustrated by that, too, and it strikes me that in politics, sophistry and power are all too often compelling influences in the lives of people who are at work.

When I look at one of these little 3rd-graders, I do not think they are particularly enamored with the esoteric formulations of some Supreme Court constitutional theory. They want to know can I go to a school where I will be happy and safe, and can I have my bright eyes lit up by the excitement of learning.

I think that all too often, we do not get beyond ourselves in this city, and as much as I believe that public choice and family choice and the involvement that I see in the parents—I met with some parents the other night, and I have to tell you that some of these parents are just incredible in the way they reach out beyond themselves for these children. The Scholarship Fund provides about half the money, and an awful lot of parents who have all they can do to just stay up with their current needs find a way to reach beyond that and provide the other half.

It is a precious part of the solution, but in the main, the solution is to fix the entire D.C. school system. I think public choice is part of that process, and I think competition helps. I think that once the school system knows that I do not have an automatic command and control over who will fill my halls, whether they are winning or losing here, they will in fact reach out as the school I cited in Maryland did and encourage people to come back by demonstrating greater success.

So I do not want to understate the importance of public school choice or school choice in terms of the encouragement it gives to public schools to get better and in the end, the improvement of the overall performance of the public schools is what must be done. I think General Becton is committed to this. We have visited about this, and while school choice is a precious part of the answer, it is not the full answer. But we have an obligation to have our eyes opened to all the answers, all parts of the answers, that can be.

Senator BROWNBACK. General Becton raised a question about the scholarship proposal, suggesting that his big concern is a lack of accountability in a scholarship type of system. Do you have concerns about that in the legislation, whether there is going to be sufficient accountability if some of these scholarships are used for private institutions?

Mr. ARMEY. No, I do not have any concerns about that. We have a school system here in this city that has got to be understood to be very likely the most tragic failure of any school system anyplace in America. I do not think anyone is sitting around, worrying about the lack of accountability of this system. This system has gone on for too many years without people worrying about accountability.

I have been to the schools, I have seen these children. I have seen people who have taken resources that are sometimes as little as one-third of the per-child resources, and they have turned on these children to learning. I sat in one school, and grade after grade after grade, I asked the children, "What is your favorite subject," and grade after grade after grade, they said, "Science and math, science and math."

I defy you to go into any public school in America and find the majority of children in the school saying their favorite subject in the 3rd grade is science or math.

I think people who worry about lack of accountability ought to visit the schools, look at the children, see the excitement in their young faces, and see the dedication of those teachers. I have said it before, and I will say it again—there is absolutely nothing more precious than a dedicated, loving teacher, and that is what you find here. These people are generally teaching and working at salaries that are considerably less than they get, and they are in it for the love. And for us to think that an abstraction like accountability should negate a recognition of their good works is, I think, a failure on our part to, in fact, do the job that we need to go out and see for ourselves.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much for being here with us today and for sponsoring this legislation and the suggestion that you will be putting it in the appropriations bill coming through the House. There will be similar efforts on the Senate side as well. I think that it is important legislation to move forward.

Thanks for your leadership, Majority Leader Armey.

Mr. ARMEY. Thank you. I might add that I have spoken to the Subcommittee on Appropriations that has jurisdiction over the city, and I am very confident; I believe they will in fact have this legislation in the House. As you know, both the chairman of that subcommittee and the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee are both in support of the legislation. So I think we will have it properly placed in the legislative process, and as we gain public recognition and understanding of the value of this in the lives of the children, we will be able to take ourselves beyond the needs of systems and institutions and get to the ground we must stand on.

I thank you again for holding these hearings.

Senator BROWNBACK. And I might note, too, that it actually may well save money even though this is in addition to the current public education—the scholarship is $3,200 versus $7,000-plus that the public education system spends. So it is not taking money out of the public education system, and it may actually cost less in delivering a better education for these children.

Mr. ARMEY. I believe that is right on a per capita basis. By the same token, I have encouraged the subcommittee, and I think the subcommittee is fully committed to the proposition that whatever funds are made available for this scholarship program in Washington, D.C. should not be gained by reducing funds available to the D.C. public school system. While we hold so close to our hearts the importance that this can have to the number of children who benefit from it, I think we should never lose sight of the fact that the large task, the more important thing for the greatest comprehensive care of all the children of this city is the rehabilitation of the D.C. public school system so that it performs at such a level.

I think the competition engendered by choice helps in that process, and I do not want to see this choice program funded by reductions in revenues for D.C. schools themselves. I do not think that will be the case.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good. Thank you very much. I appreciate your coming.

Mr. ARMEY. Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Our second panel consists of Jeanne Allen, President of the Center for Education Reform; Nina Shokraii, an Education Policy Analyst, Domestic Policy Studies, at the Heritage Foundation; and Kent Amos, President of the Urban Family Institute.

We certainly appreciate all three of you coming to testify today. What I would like to do if I could with each of you is to have your full testimony put into the record; if you can summarize your statement, and then let us have a good interaction back and forth and even amongst the panelists. If you hear comments from other panelists that you would like to react to, please feel free to do that.

Have you agreed upon any order of presentation, or are there any needs that individuals have to testify first? If not, I will just go down in the order in which I called you.

Ms. Allen, President of The Center for Education Reform, we very much appreciate you being here today, and the floor is yours. And welcome back, I might say.

## TESTIMONY OF JEANNE ALLEN,[1] PRESIDENT, THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM

Ms. ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

First, I want to say that I applaud Congressman Armey for his sentiment and his passion over this issue. He, like Congressman Flake and hundreds of lawmakers across the country, both Democrat, Republican and in between, embrace the very concept that he came here to talk to you about, and in fact, preliminary results from the Center's 1997 poll which will be released next week indicate 86 percent support among African-Americans alone for some sort of school choice option that includes private schools. It is clear the time has come, and I am delighted that you have focused on the issue.

I came back today, though, having been here 6 months ago, to primarily focus on the quest for charter schools in the District and related issues which the District has been grappling with.

I have to say that the effort remains slow and encumbered by what I see as bureaucratic foot-dragging. I think there is a lack of clear vision of what the officials in charge think about what charters can do for D.C. school children. I believe it is still being looked at and approached very much as an aside, a fad, an additional thing as opposed to how it is being considered across the country, which is a reinvigoration of public education and the opportunity for real people, teachers and parents and civic leaders, to create schools responsive to needs in communities and make that part of, as I said, sort of revolutionizing the public education system.

In the city, no less than four major business and civic groups have been working full-time to clear hurdles and send positive signs of encouragement throughout the city. For an area with the third-strongest law in the land, the dearth of charter applicants and action to me is appalling, and I certainly do not think it was Congress' intent.

Meanwhile, Chicago, which is not 2 hours away by plane, was plagued with problems one could consider worse than the District's. Their major legislation replaced the ineffective school board with a CEO and a Board of Trustees and gave them 4 years to turn around a city where the dropout rate hovers around 50 percent. Chronic truancy in Chicago is two times the State average.

Not 2 years after the changes were made, already dramatic reforms and efforts are beginning to be realized. The new trustees have fired 12 principals from schools with poor academic results; they have reconstituted seven schools entirely—most of those people were asked to reapply; most of them were not rehired back by the CEO in charge, Paul Vallas.

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[1] The prepared statement of Ms. Allen with an attachment of a statement from Malcolm Peabody, Chairman of Friends of Choice in Urban Schools, Inc., and Lex Towle, Managing Director of the AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation, Inc., before the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, appear in the Appendix on pages 51 and 55 respectively.

Chicago Trustees also begin to recognize that reading problems, which Congressman Armey also referred to in the District of Columbia, were the direct result of a lack of traditional, fundamental reading instruction. They pushed a "back to basics" effort that emphasized phonics. They also required homework in every grade—the higher the grade, the more homework—and social promotion is not prohibited.

Any child not able to pass muster or be guaranteed a place, say, from 4th to 5th grade the following year was required to sit in summer school this year to make up deficiencies, and I am told that progress was enormous this summer given the concentration and the focus and the fact that those people teaching summer school and those children going knew that if they did not pass what was required of them, they would not have that grade to go into in the coming year.

Serious accountability is being taken in Chicago, and it is something that I think we can learn a great deal from, and I refer to several other incidences and effects of the Chicago Reform Act in my testimony.

Chicago also has charter schools, as Illinois passed a law the same year that Washington, D.C. did. There, Chicago has already authorized 10 of the 15 charter laws permitted by law—there is a cap there—and those schools range from schools for dropouts rates, although the CEO of the Chicago schools, Paul Vallas, has also instituted 26 new alternative schools for troubled children. So in addition to those schools, there are international baccalaureate and very high challenging curricula for children in the city of Chicago through charter schools; there are some "back to basics" schools; there are some vocational schools; there is a panoply of very strong and encouraging charter schools that we are going to be following with greater interest.

One of the things that Paul Vallas also did not shy away from was trying to use the Catholic schools there as a template to follow. Making no bones about it, he said that he wanted to practice the tried and true practices that the Catholic schools there were doing, using tests and standards as a benchmark. Over the last 2 years, there has been significant progress among both elementary and middle-school children in reading and math. There is still a lot of work to be done, but there have been significant point gains where for years there had been none.

In Chicago, there were no delays in repairing dilapidated buildings. It was one of the first orders of business in 1995, and by 1996, many of the most serious safety infractions were fixed.

Is it any wonder that a district the size of Chicago, with 550 schools, can make progress when it permits itself to hire any number of private contracts? In fact, private contracting was something that Paul Vallas put on the top of the table when he first went in to look at maintenance and all the various things he had to do in the school system from, as I said, maintenance to food service. It also pays its bills on time. He was willing to open up to people throughout the State, and as a result, the number of work orders completed in Chicago rose from over 1,000 in 1 year to 16,000 just last year. So they got their buildings up-to-speed.

Just 6 months ago, I shared with you my frustration over the pace of already-enacted school reform here. As an observer with a wide and deep knowledge of reforms at play throughout the country, I recommended that some time lines be established here for officials to carry out the intent of the charter law. I spoke of the unparalleled potential for dramatic improvement that charters are bringing to children everywhere. Yet, while over 150,000 children started off to about 750 charter schools across the country just last week, the District still has only four, two of which are new, one of which should have been closed long ago, quite frankly, and one that has struggled for every penny and ounce of freedom otherwise guaranteed to the school director by law.

I have to share with you that an acquaintance who worked briefly at D.C. public schools recently remarked to me that he had gone in as an avid defender of the system as is and left reluctantly endorsing full-scale vouchers. While I, for one, offer unconditional support for aiding low-income children with real choices, I am not sure that drawing that support from an experience with an ineffective bureaucracy is how I would like to find compatriots. For if that is the impact a central district has on its bright-eyed employees—and it does so every day—how can it be assured that any reform, no matter how mandated, is followed and carried through?

The D.C. Public Charter School Coalition has recommended several steps to Congress to ensure parity and equity for charter schools. I think their recommendations are sound, and as a result I have appended them to my testimony. But I have gone further to suggest that Congress make further demands and squelch the ability of the board and the school system to suck the life out of this critical education reform; otherwise, we will be having the same conversation next year.

As we have seen in countless other States, if the people controlling the purse are not advocates and are not charged with fulfilling the law with appropriate oversight, then little will be done to affect charter schools. The D.C. Public Charter School Coalition, for example, has been negotiating for 6 months on the definition of "preference" when it comes to facilities for charter schools. Why it takes 6 months to define what "preference" should mean when Congress' intent was relatively clear—to me, this should be perhaps several meetings within a month's time span; get it over with, and get it done, so that people can have access to facilities.

I think the main reason that DCPS is in this position—and there are hundreds of other stories I could share with you of foot-dragging—is because they have been wedded to doing business as usual for too long; there are no incentives to push this, and as I said, I do not think there is a clear vision and a role for what charter schools can do for this city.

Why did it take more than 6 months, for example, as you well know now, from one of the only two charter schools in D.C. to get a portion of Federal charter school grant money. If two or three people have to sign a check, to me, that does not take 6 months. Six months, countless meetings, media attention, constant badgering—is this what we want for D.C. school children?

In Chicago, the Trustees have fully-established, well-publicized time lines and goals. The legislature has assigned people to work hands-on with the Trustees to offer support as well as hold accountable those now in power. Part of this, to be sure, is about personalities, but it is also having a set of six goals and sticking to them. You cannot turn around a city with the severe problems of D.C. without doing so.

Among my recommendations as a result of my observations are the following: First, you need to convene a congressional briefing session for the Public Charter School Board, General Becton and staff, the Board of Trustees and others that are critical to this reform—some of the agencies you mentioned earlier, Senator, that were to be helping in the charter effort, including the Smithsonian and others—and have that briefing conducted by leaders of a dozen or so States where charter schools are prospering and flourishing. I just do not think people understand or, quite frankly, get it and what can be done here.

Second, enact measures, requirements and time lines similar to those that are paving the way for dramatic reform in Chicago.

Third, as I recommended in April, require 100 percent of per-pupil funding to be disbursed early in the process so that schools can get off and running, buy curricula, train teachers in the summer, in four easy payments. Congress can make special allocations from prior year funding; it would not break the bank, and it certainly would not increase appropriations.

Fourth, assign a senior-level congressional staff person to attend and monitor all charter school policy meetings and serve as the liaison with the civil resource groups. This person would ensure that the congressional intent of the law was being fulfilled, and the DCPS would know clearly that Congress is aware of its various moves.

Finally, establish a separate State education agency for the District. The District is the only area in the country where the SEA and the local education agency are one; it puts a conflict of interest in place if they have to be one and the same in terms of funding, and they view everything as competition as a result.

Please understand that I do not question the motivations or intention of General Becton, the DCPS, or his staff. It is clear, however, that the priorities of DCPS are not consistent with fundamental education reform and that foot-dragging and delays will continue on every education measure unless and until the control is reestablished. This is no doubt an issue for the Board of Trustees, but as Congress created the board, so too must Congress amend its plans if it fails to develop as originally enacted.

Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, Ms. Allen. That was very good, pointed testimony, and I look forward to some questions to ask you about carrying out some of these items.

I, too, am very frustrated. This was 6 months ago; it was April 17. Much of your testimony then was similar to what it is now. Why haven't we had more progress in moving forward on this? Perhaps it is time for us to set those specific time line dates and just say this is the way it is going to be if you are not going to move forward on these proposals.

Ms. Shokraii, Education Policy Analyst for The Heritage, we are delighted to have you with us today. Thanks for joining us.

## TESTIMONY OF NINA SHOKRAII,[1] EDUCATION POLICY ANALYST, DOMESTIC POLICY STUDIES, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Ms. SHOKRAII. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, it is an honor to appear before you today to discuss reforms in the District of Columbia public schools. Much has happened since the D.C. Financial Control Board appointed General Julius Becton as Superintendent of D.C. Schools last November.

The Board has acted swiftly and efficiently with many of the dilemmas facing the D.C. school system, specifically, by stripping the D.C. School Board of its power over budget and policy. But, as with many one-size-fits-all solutions, General Becton's solutions are bound to displease some people. This was particularly apparent when they swiftly voted on shutting down 11 D.C. public schools just a few months ago, although a fiscally sound solution, it lacked one key component—parental input.

Nearly 2 years ago, Congress enacted one of the strongest charter school laws in the country for D.C., yet the city has only managed to open two. While the rest of the country, as Jeanne noted, is reaping the benefits of charter schools, the Nation's Capital, whose families could benefit the most, is lagging behind.

The dismal state of D.C. public schools, coupled with the current decrepit state of its school buildings, which has caused a 3-week delay in opening this fall, the abundance of violence and drugs on school grounds, and the vast but ineffective school bureaucracy, has mobilized everyone from the President to Congress to local activists to find ways to fix the system quickly.

Mr. Chairman, there are many elements to an effective solution to the D.C. school system's shortcomings. One is an overhaul of the public schools, especially their suffocating bureaucracy, which General Becton has taken on and vowed to fix by the year 2000. Another is to incorporate competition by offering charter schools within the public system, an alternative that I hope will flourish under the General's rule.

But the best solution is to offer D.C. parents vouchers to send their children to the schools of their choice, be they public, private or parochial. The District currently allows parents to choose between public schools of their choice. It is critical to make sure that option is expanded to private and religious schools.

This is crucial for three reasons, the first being that private schools, especially parochial schools, produce better results, especially in the inner cities. As shown in the Milwaukee and Cleveland school choice experiments and the numerous private scholarship programs around the country, low-income inner-city children are benefiting from school choice. Recent studies of the Milwaukee school choice program by Paul Peterson of Harvard University and Jay Greene of the University of Houston, for instance, show that after attending the choice program in Milwaukee for 3 years, the gap in test scores between whites and minorities narrowed from 33 to 50 percent. This study was nearly replicated by Cecilia Rouse from Princeton University, who found very similar results.

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[1] The prepared statement of Ms. Shokraii with an attachment entitled "A Comparison of Public and Private Education in the District of Columbia," September 17, 1997, appear in the Appendix on pages 62 and 68 respectively.

Other studies also confirm the success of choice programs, especially in the Catholic school arena. The most important work in this area, as you know, was done by the late sociologist, James Coleman, of the University of Chicago, who found that Catholic school sophomores scored 10 percent higher in science, 12 percent higher in civics, 17 to 21 percent higher in math, reading and vocabulary than their public school counterparts. His study also showed that a child is more likely to attend school with a child of another race in a private school than in a public one and that dropout rates are significantly lower in private schools than in public schools.

Recent studies confirm Coleman's findings with an even higher degree of accuracy. William Evans and Robert Schwab from the University of Maryland, for instance, found that attending a Catholic high school raised the probability of finishing high school and entering college for inner-city children by 17 percentage points. A study by Derek Neal at the University of Chicago found that African-American and Hispanic students attending urban Catholic schools were more than twice as likely to graduate from college as their counterparts in public schools. They also found that 27 percent of minority graduates who started college went on to graduate, compared with only 11 percent in urban public schools. Neal's study was just recently replicated by University of Oregon Professor David Figlio, who found exactly the same results.

Finally, Caroline Hoxby from Harvard has found that competition from private schools increased academic achievement at both public and private schools. She found that greater private school competition raises the academic quality of public schools, the wages of the teachers in the public schools, and high school graduation rates of public school students.

Through choice, Ms. Hoxby concludes that both public and private school kids would increase the amount of time spent in school by about 2 years, while their math and reading test scores would improve by about 10 percent. She also noted a wage increase later on in life of 14 percentage points.

Another reason why school choice will make a tremendous change in Washington, D.C. is the fact that more dollars will actually reach the classrooms. The legislation that you have offered with your colleagues channels Federal dollars in the most direct way to parents, who then select the school of choice for their children.

And finally, vouchers would save the public schools money to use on public school students. According to a study, for instance, of the cost of private school education conducted by the Cato Institute, 67 percent of all private elementary and secondary schools charge $2,500 or less in tuition. The average tuition in private schools is only $3,116. This is half the national average of $6,857 to educate a student in a public school. In D.C., the per pupil cost is even higher. The last estimate I have seen was $8,841, and many think that number is even higher. The average cost of a Catholic school in D.C. is less than half that amount. The public schools involved in a school choice or voucher program can in turn use the extra space and money to benefit their students by managing their resources better or taking firmer action against unruly students.

Mr. Chairman, school choice is the only reform mechanism that would offer D.C. schools immediate and measurable results. Offering the parents of the District of Columbia choices through the traditional public education system via charter schools and private schools will ease the burden on the District's public schools while ultimately offering all children in D.C. a better education.

Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much for that testimony. I look forward to some questions and interactions.

Mr. Amos, President of the Urban Family Institute, thank you for joining us today. I appreciate it very much, and the floor is yours.

## TESTIMONY OF KENT B. AMOS,[1] PRESIDENT, URBAN FAMILY INSTITUTE

Mr. AMOS. Thank you, Chairman Brownback.

First, I would like to note that we will amend our written testimony because things have been very fluid in our area in the last few hours and given last night's conversations, which we think will be very positive toward this end.

In the last several hours, we have been able to have a conversation with a number of the city leaders around the question that we bring before you today, and that is the question of how is it that we are going to fund the charter schools that are going to come on line in this city. We have become part of the charter school movement by a particular route which we will come back to a moment if time permits.

But let me start with what we are asking you to support, and that is a change in the funding stream on how we fund charter schools in the District of Columbia. The reason for this request is that we believe that the one way we can really impact this system is to bring private capital to bear.

My background is one from corporate America—again, I will comment on that later—but we have been able to put together a pot of money, fairly sizeable, from the private sector, which is willing to invest in the public schools in the District. Those dollars therefore have got to be repaid. The funding that we currently receive does not include capital dollars. If you want to improve the school buildings in this city, bring the private sector heavily involved into it, and we believe we can and will do that. But to repay the loans associated with that effort, we would like to be able to share equally in the capital costs associated with what comes to the District of Columbia.

In addition, each of the teachers that we want to bring into the charter schools that we will be representing next year and beyond, we want to be able to be fully compensated as well, which includes their pension costs. Currently, the formula does not provide for the pension dollars that flow to the District of Columbia to flow to the charter schools; we would ask that be amended as well, and we believe that the city is going to move to do that.

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[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Amos appears in the Appendix on page 81.

Third, right now, the funding structure is such that the funds are predicated on the previous year's enrollment. To the extent that charter schools are brand new, there is no previous school enrollment, and therefore you are still a year out from receiving funding. For a start-up organization, the initial days are very important. Therefore, we would hope that we would find some formula that would allow for those dollars to flow to the charter schools as well. We think we could use the month of September—because actually, the fiscal year starts in October—and just count who is there the first day, so to speak, and use that as your measurement, but if that does not work, we can find another format.

And finally, we ask that if some point in time, the adult education programs in Washington, D.C. begin to be refunded, that charter schools also participate in those dollars. The truth of the matter is our situation is such that all the children in our community are, in many instances, surrounded by adults who need the same kind of training that the children do, because they have gone through these systems prior to their children and have also not been fully developed. So therefore, adult education at some point is going to be a very crucial element, and we would like to combine that.

So we are asking that you support what we believe will be an initiative by the District of Columbia leadership to, in fact, amend the existing District resolution to accommodate these things; if Federal law would follow that, we would certainly be appreciative.

I come to this hearing today as a fourth-generation Washingtonian. My grandfather taught in the D.C. public schools for 47 years. My father graduated from a D.C. public school and became an attorney. My mother taught in the D.C. public schools for 32 years. I am a graduate of D.C. public schools, and in fact, 16 years ago, I came back to Washington, D.C. as vice president of a Fortune 50 company and put my children in the D.C. public schools. A lot of people suggested that was not the wisest thing that a corporate executive could do at that time, or certainly today, but we felt it was important that we live up to the legacy of our public education system.

We found very quickly, however, that choice that we made may have a negative impact on our home and on our family, so we decided to do something about it. That "something about it" that we did was to first of all bring corporate resource to bear into the public system that our children found themselves in. Through my position in the company, we were able to put a computer lab in the school; we were able to put a summer jobs program in the school for the children around us. But it was not enough. We still found ourselves with children in our home who needed the kinds of supports that only a family can provide and that a community that surrounds it children can provided.

So my wife and I decided to open up our home and our resources to the children who surrounded our family. To make a long story short, Senator, we adopted 87 children over a 16-year period, 11 of which—we had as many as 25 kids in our home every, single day for as many as 2 years.

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Senator BROWNBACK. That $500 per child tax credit would be a nice one for you. [Laughter.]

Mr. AMOS. Any time, anywhere.

So we have sent dozens of children to college, children whom many people would have suggested would not have made it. We have seen a host of our children graduate from college and go on to receive secondary degrees; we have 11 with advanced degrees today.

But I am also here as one who has seen his children reach those pinnacles, but has also seen his 16-year-old son gunned down as he was heading to school. We have also been there when our 19-year-old son, who came home from his freshman year of college and was playing basketball on a local playground was stabbed to death in an argument over a basketball. We have also gone down to Norfolk Stadium in our son's junior year to bring him home in a body bag because he was stabbed in front of a 7–Eleven. We have seen our children gunned down, stabbed to death, and in fact, a 16-year-old child of ours was hung on his 16th birthday because he would not sell drugs.

So the reason why I am here today as a parent, if you will, and the reason why I walked away from corporate America to now beg for a living, running a small nonprofit organization, is not because we are here trying to do something about schools—we are trying to save our society and in many ways, our soul.

The question for us is not how do you structure a school, but how does a system as powerful as this one create the kind of carnage that is going on in our society, and how can we do something different about it. So we dedicated ourselves to trying to figure out a way to change the system that is producing the kind of foolishness that is going on in this society today, and we believe we can do that.

We believe, as we did several years ago, working with your colleagues in the Senate on S. 138, with then Senators Danforth and Bradley, when we put forth a bill called at that time "The Community Schools Act" to use school buildings as the centering point for community life in many communities where there is no centering point. That piece of legislation went through, and we are still supporting that.

Today, we are here supporting charter schools. Why? Again, because it comes back to the same principle: How do we organize community around caregiving in a sufficient manner that children end up productive adults. That is the goal. It is really simple; it is not hard.

What we said we would do is, OK, how can we find a way to use public buildings called schools as a part of the human development equation. We brought corporate American to bear. We now have, as I said earlier, a host of dollars available to us by the corporate community that they are willing to spend on public schools if, in fact, they have control of the assets. And as any business interest, we have a way to repay that loan. We figured out that for about 2,000 to 3,000 kids, at $1,500 per child—which is basically what it is coming down to with the capital cost—we can fund some $50 million worth of changes in the physical structure of the buildings that we are talking about, and that is where we want to go, and we will use the capital dollars to accomplish that.

In addition to that, we are working not only with schools, but with families. In the last several years, we have been working with public housing, and I know this is not the subject of the hearing today, but you cannot talk about children who go to schools and who come from public housing and not understand the environment they are coming from. The truth of the matter is they are only in school 10 percent of the time; 90 percent of their time, they are out of school. What happens to them there? Our argument is that we have to do something there as well. So, working with then Secretary Cisneros and now with HUD, we have figured out a way to bring education reform to public housing and tie that to public schools, surrounded with other public assets like playgrounds and with the faith community of church and other kinds of assets, building a continuum that sees to it that every, single child, every, single family has a developmental paradigm that produces the kind of outcome that we want.

In conclusion, Senator, Brownback, I would say that our plea is one of a family that has seen pain and known joy, to somehow bring the full weight and power of this institution to bring the kind of joy to all families that we know is possible. If you support the leadership of this city and the transformational efforts that we are undertaking today, give us the financial wherewithal, the political support and the intellectual capital that this city has available to it, and we can then make a difference.

Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Mr. Amos. Thank you for your work, and my heart goes out to you on those tragedies. That is just terrible to see.

It strikes me that what we are seeing take place here is that we are now allowing every life every opportunity to succeed. If you look at life as sacred, it needs to have every chance to succeed and to grow and to prosper, and that we are just not allowing that in this powerful system as you describe, Mr. Amos. That is what we really want to get at, fundamentally, is what can we change in this system to allow that beauty that is in each of those lives to be able to blossom as much as possible. It seems like now, we are just crushing so many of them, and that has apparently been your experience as well.

You are strongly supportive of the charter school effort and trying to move that forward. Do you see other things we ought to be doing as well to grant those greater opportunities?

Mr. AMOS. Yes, Senator. Let me also just be clear about my support for charter schools. I believe that Generals Becton and Williams and all are, as Jeanne said, and as I also believe Nina said, well-intentioned. We are all well-intentioned. But the system—if we wait until they do what they have to do—I think Mr. Armey talked about his grandchildren—well, my grandchildren will probably go to D.C. public schools—and I have a bunch of them, by the way; I have 22 of them. But the point is that at some point in time, we cannot wait for the system to change itself; we have got to move as expeditiously as we can.

I believe that the charter movement and also providing young people and their families with enough opportunity financially to go anywhere they can—I do not want to see a single child left behind if we do not have to—so if we can fund a child to go to another school while we build the better system, let us do it. But right now, we have got to change systemically. Again, Jeanne talked about the 750 charter schools in the country that kids are going to. Well, there are 120,000 schools. We are not going to break this thing school by school; we have got to build a systemic kind of change.

We have an opportunity here in Washington, D.C. that is very, very unique, where we can put together a systemic movement between the charter schools—there are 50 closed school buildings right now. We are proposing, for example, with our private resources, to acquire all 50 of those. That will then give us a school base of 50 buildings. Then we will join, as we already have—we are currently working with a host of people who want to fill those buildings with new ideas, new ventures—we are prepared to do that, and we have been working now for several months at putting that network together. So we think that we can work with the system and provide for it, in many instances, changes that they cannot do, because we have more flexibility. So the combination of what they want to do and what we are currently doing together will bring rapid change and thereby save more children.

Senator BROWNBACK. Mr. Amos, on purchasing those 50 buildings and starting schools, are you being supported by the education bureaucracy? Are you fighting it? How would you characterize your negotiations?

Mr. AMOS. I think it is the last word that you said; I would characterize them as "negotiations," Senator. I think we are in the process of trying to have everyone understand that collectively, we win, that fighting does not win. That is a losing proposition.

So as I said, as recently as last night, speaking with the chairman of the District of Columbia City Council's Education Committee—they have the ability to write at least a "sense of the Council" resolution—and talking last night with two members of the Financial Control Board for over an hour, everybody is beginning to understand that if we do this thing right and together, we can bring substantive change quickly. There is no reason why we cannot in the fall of 1998 have a host of schools open and ready to go in a first-class way.

Senator BROWNBACK. How many should we target to be open in the fall of 1998?

Mr. AMOS. Our goal is anywhere from 5 to 12 schools.

Senator BROWNBACK. From your organization?

Mr. AMOS. Well, it is not just our organization. It is a combination of organizations coming together and working together.

Senator BROWNBACK. Ms. Allen, how many charter schools should we target to have open a year from now?

Ms. ALLEN. Twenty.

Senator BROWNBACK. A minimum of 20. And you stated four, and I heard differing testimony here, two or four. But you have stated four, and one should be closed.

Ms. ALLEN. Yes.

Senator BROWNBACK. And I think that one is pretty well-documented as far as the problems that it has had. But you think 20 at a minimum, with the physical property available.

Ms. ALLEN. Yes. And Senator, as Mr. Amos has told you, there is no dearth of people who want to do this. There is a lot of lack of information. There are not as many people out there who have stepped up to the plate as could be potentially quality candidates, working with a variety of the resource groups around, quite frankly, because you do not even want to get involved in a process that just looks like a bear. Gee, there is this application, there is that, and I hear the money is not coming, and I hear that special education might not be there, and I hear that, well, they had a problem getting their Federal money—and suddenly, you have a great teacher out there who wants to do something, and you have given that teacher no hope. Whereas if you look at communities where we have had charter schools in existence as long as 4 or 5 years in States like Minnesota, they have not only become schools for, say, 150 or 200 kids, but they have become these great meccas of a community. The Urban League has gotten involved in an after-school program. There is before-school care by the YMCA. The civic groups have adopted them. I mean, suddenly, people who have wanted to be able to have input and guide children along have found an opportunity in so many cities through charter schools because there are no rules written saying, no, you cannot. It is very open.

So to a large extent, while Kent is absolutely right, there is a much larger mission in terms of savings lives of people like he is directly involved in, the whole concept of education reform through both school choice and charter schools helps to build back a community and give children hope, so that those kids on the outside are wondering what they are missing inside, whereas right now, the kids on the inside are wondering what they are missing outside.

Senator BROWNBACK. And it looks like in the community, too, as Congressman Armey was talking about, this is a way of saving public education, and it gets fought so much.

You, though, Ms. Allen, believe that the only way we will really get at this is by setting specific time lines for certain accomplishments. You think that otherwise, the system will slow-roll and crush anybody who really wants to get a grasp on establishing charter schools?

Ms. ALLEN. That is my feeling, yes.

Senator BROWNBACK. And you listed several specifics. Have you listed specifics in your testimony on what should be done by what time lines?

Ms. ALLEN. I have some that I could amend—some of the suggestions filed from April that I could amend based on that.

Senator BROWNBACK. I would appreciate it, and we can look back at your testimony in April again to see about putting those on fast-forward.

Let me ask you as well, in Chicago, you noted a similar situation if not worse than in the District of Columbia and the dramatic reform that took place in a short period of time. You mentioned the firing of 12 principals in the Chicago school system.

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How many principals have been fired in the District of Columbia; do you know?

Ms. ALLEN. I believe three. There were a lot of reassignments, also.

Senator BROWNBACK. Do you think there has been ample work done in the District of Columbia in these restructurings, or do you have any separate thoughts—as separate and distinct from charter, just from the operation of the current public school system?

Ms. ALLEN. The complaint that big-city officials often use, which for a long time has been very, very valid, is that, well, we cannot really reconstitute a staff because we have the union, and we have a collective bargaining contract that says X, Y, and Z, and if we dismiss staff, they will end up somewhere else in the system, so why do this? There are lots of excuses.

In Chicago, they have a very strong union. Chicago Teachers Union is one of the strongest in the country. But the attitude of the trustees and in fact of the legislature was: You can be with us or you can be against us, and if you are against us, we are going to profile you for just that. So get out of the way; we are going to move in, and we are going to take care of this. And if you have a problem because someone has tenure but they are incompetent, why don't we sit down and talk about it in public?

So it was real clear from the very start. I mean, there were not words to that effect spoken specifically by Paul Vallas, and I am not putting words in his mouth, but it was clear all along—we have a job to do; if you are in the way, if you have a problem, come to the table and make sure it is clear to everybody what you are doing, because we are going to get rid of people who are not working for our kids.

That attitude is not here. The attitude is that, well, we have these people, and there is a separate evaluation, and they have had several years—it is almost piecemeal.

Senator BROWNBACK. Here in the District of Columbia, it is too piecemeal?

Ms. ALLEN. Yes. And with the lack of standards and clear tests, which were also part of the original D.C. education reform bill, I am not sure where they stand right now. The lack of an overall set of good tests used, with a high rigorous standard to assess where children stand—you would be able to see pretty quickly which schools were falling down and which were not, and you would have been able to close failing schools as opposed to some schools that were actually doing a darned good job. We can assess them like that.

Senator BROWNBACK. Do we know that in the District of Columbia? Do we have sufficient test scoring to know what schools are failing and which ones are succeeding?

Ms. ALLEN. You have your basic standardized tests, norm-referenced tests, that most cities have, but I do not think there is anything more specific, where in Chicago, for example, Milwaukee and New York, you have specific reading, math and science tests that are pegged to how much kids should know as opposed to norm-referenced how much everybody else is doing. A norm-referenced test simply gives you 50 percent of the people are above average, 50 percent are below. Based on that, D.C. test scores are pretty low.

Based on other kinds of criteria, what would it look like if you were supposed to be doing "X" in 4th grade in math, and children in 4th grade math were tested, and we found out that, say, 40 percent were not there—then people could get to work. That is what they did in Milwaukee. They recognized that less than half the kids could do basic math in 4th grade, and everybody got motivated and did something about it.

Senator BROWNBACK. But you are saying we have not accumulated that same sort of——

Ms. ALLEN. Objective analysis.

Senator BROWNBACK [continuing]. Objective, clear, specific test data for the District of Columbia public school students.

Ms. ALLEN. I do not believe we have, no.

Senator BROWNBACK. Mr. Amos, did you want to respond to that?

Mr. AMOS. No. I think Jeanne covered it very well.

Senator BROWNBACK. Do you agree with her statement?

Mr. AMOS. I would agree. I think there is a certain amount of data that is beginning to be amassed, but unfortunately, it is going to tell us exactly what Jeanne is saying, and I think that, again, the system can only move so fast. And I guess what we are suggesting is that we have got to help them move faster.

Senator BROWNBACK. And it seems to me that the very first thing you have to have is objective data. To really know what sorts of steps and means and things you have to do, you have to know what is the extent of the problem. As bad as it might seem, you have to know first what is the extent of the problem before you can get in and specifically begin to fight it.

Mr. AMOS. I believe, Senator, that there is enough body of data to understand the gravity of the circumstance. That is fairly well-documented. It may not be on an individualized school basis as it may need to be, but we have a fairly good handle on that.

I would suggest that the first thing that needs to be done is to pretty much believe that every child is capable, as Mr. Armey talked about, and looking into the eyes of these children as I do every, single day—I still see kids every, single day and have for 16 years, and I know they are capable of something else, and we demand of those children to be capable of something else. The question is what paradigm do you put in place for that to take place. Kids in my home, for example, were all reading below level for the most part, just as has been described here. Well, if you are reading below level, what do you have to do? First, you have to make sure there is a paradigm that gets you reading more. So in our house, for example, there is a minimum of 2 hours' reading every night, period. That was a starting point. If you watch television, every hour of television you watch, you also have to read for an hour; so if you watch 2 hours of television, you have 4 hours of reading—and you have to do it the same night.

Senator BROWNBACK. But not at the same time.

Mr. AMOS. No, definitely not at the same time. But what that ended up doing was that people stopped watching television. The formula became real easy—but it also meant that I had to stay up later, and I had to read, too—not you do it, and I do not do it—I have read more in the last 16 years than I did in the first 45 before that. But that is beside the point.

The point is that you have to create the kind of environment. We can do the same thing in our schools. If schools are still operating on the same paradigm—school starts at 9 and ends at 3—and doing all the same things, well, you are behind, and you are not going to catch up. So what we are suggesting is that schools stay open later, or open earlier, and that the adults in the students' lives also come there. And by the way, some of those adults have gone through bad experiences in literally those same buildings. So if the adult in that child's life has gone to the same school and had the same experience, what makes it any more attractive for them to go back? Well, we have got to change that so that when the adult comes back and the child comes back, there is a new day there, there is a new encouragement there, there is a new set of resources available to them within the same dollars. There is not new money here; we are talking about how do you allocate the dollars and the resources, and we believe we can do it.

One of the things we told the principal at the high school where my kids went to school was, look, I want to make sure the school stays open later. And the argument was that, well, we cannot keep it open later because somebody is going to vandalize the school. I said give me a key. I am pretty good at unlocking doors, and I can lock it back up. He did, and we kept the buildings open later, even if it meant just us being there, and I took the liability.

So how do you create the kind of environment, I guess we are suggesting here, that creates the new learning paradigm for all of our children and their families.

Senator BROWNBACK. Ms. Shokraii, your testimony supports full-scale vouchers. Would you support the small step forward on the scholarship program?

Ms. SHOKRAII. Absolutely.

Senator BROWNBACK. OK. Ms. Allen, do you support a full-scale voucher type of program for the District of Columbia?

Ms. ALLEN. Absolutely. I think anybody that is within an income level should have access to the public, private, or parochial school of their choice.

Senator let me just add briefly that over the last several weeks, we have been meeting a number of parents and community-based and some church-based groups who have heard about this effort on the Hill and are very, very interested. I have long known that parents do care, and parents do get involved when asked, but it really never hit home until these last few weeks, when you see people who say, I am on public assistance, and they called me last week and told me my child is going to be in special education, and I do not know why, because he was doing well all year—she would love to come and tell her story to you, by the way—and all of a sudden, they want me to do this. What am I supposed to do? they say I have to sign these papers and put him in a special education class, or he cannot come back to school.

She has nowhere to go. She has no help. She has no support. We hear stories like this every day. It is just not fair.

Senator BROWNBACK. Mr. Amos, do you support a full-scale voucher program for District of Columbia public schools, D.C. students?

Mr. AMOS. Again, like Jeanne, I think there ought to be some economic question associated with it, and I think it also ought to be on a trial basis, candidly, until such time as we give an opportunity for the system to change itself. If it does not, then so be it. But I think that the system is moving toward change, and that we ought to give that opportunity. At the same time, however, I think we ought to have some limited scholarship program, if you will, vouchers, if you will, that will allow children who are in need of that kind of education right now. While we go through our machinations, if you will, as adults to change the system, we should not hold the children back. So therefore, I would have some limited support for that, yes.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, I thank you all for coming. I must say I am disappointed, not in your testimony, but that since April 17, there has not been further progress made. This is a paramount issue for the District of Columbia, how we educate our children, and we have to start making more progress. We need to get all the facts on the table, and we need to move forward rapidly. We just cannot wait for a bureaucracy to crush more kids.

I hope we can have some of you back here to be willing to review the system in another 6 months to a year and that your statements at that time will be much more positive because we have made much more change. At the end, our objective always has to be to be able to stare in that child's face and say, "I did everything I could to recognize you and to be able to give you every chance you have."

So we look for you to continue looking at the school system, and thank you very much for testifying today.

Our final panel today will be General Julius Becton, Chief Executive Officer, District of Columbia Public Schools, and Dr. Bruce MacLaury, Chairman of the Emergency Transition Education Board of Trustees.

Thank you very much for coming today. We appreciate it. We also have with us today Chuck Williams, retired Major General, Chief Operating Officer for the D.C. Public School System, who has joined us on the panel as well. Thank you very much. I am sorry we do not have a name plate up there for you, although that may help you to not get as many questions that way.

Thank you very much for coming. I called this hearing because I have a lot of serious concerns about what is taking place in the District of Columbia public schools. We heard some strong testimony before us today, and I look forward to hearing your response to what you have been questioned about publicly and seeing if we cannot get to the bottom of some of this.

Each of us holds in our heart the clear desire to have the best education system possible for these kids, and the question becomes how do you get there. I want to hear how you folks think you are doing on getting there, and then I have some real concerns about how the pace is going and what is happening.

As the chairman of Emergency Transition Education Board of Trustees, Mr. MacLaury, we will go with you first if that would be OK. We are delighted to have you here. We will accept your entire written testimony into the record, and you can summarize if you would like or present it in full.

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## TESTIMONY OF BRUCE K. MACLAURY,[1] CHAIRMAN, EMERGENCY TRANSITION EDUCATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. MACLAURY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this opportunity to present the views of the Emergency Board of Trustees on the progress toward school reform in the District of Columbia.

As you know, the Trustees have been given until June 30, 2000 to accomplish wide-ranging and long-lasting reforms for the District of Columbia's school system. Inescapably, we have had to make tough choices and put safe and secure schools at the very top of the list. If our motto, "Children First," means anything, it means ensuring that students go to schools that are safe from violence and free from leaky roofs that could cause fire code violations and unexpected shutdowns as we have had in the past.

This administration took over from earlier ones that had allowed schools to deteriorate while not even spending the admittedly inadequate capital funds that they had at their disposal. We were given not quite $50 million to make a responsible start toward stabilizing aging schools, and we gave full support to General Becton when he decided that the job had to be done right by replacing leaky roofs instead of patching them in an endless cycle of wasting taxpayer dollars and disruptions during the school year.

When we took on our new responsibilities, the public school system was in meltdown. Data on students and staff were difficult to obtain and hard to verify; procurement practices and financial controls were lax, and standards for hiring and evaluation were unenforced.

I begin on these points for two reasons—first, to give General Becton credit that he has rarely received for taking on a series of actions to rationalize an organization and put it on a sound footing. He has worked hard over the past 10 months to put in place the people and the systems needed to do the job—but much of that effort that has already been made has not been visible.

The second reason I cite this effort is because the groundwork has brought us to the point where real accountability is now becoming possible. Beginning with this new school year, you and the public will know what to expect, how soon it should happen, and who is responsible. Our fundamental principle is that the performance of every individual in this system must be measured by how well their work contributes to increased student learning, and that accountability begins with the Trustees and with General Becton.

Over the past several months, we have obtained broad public input on how to shape our academic plan for the coming year and beyond. In an upcoming public meeting, we expect to ratify this ambitious program, which includes, first, tough new academic standards and assessments to go with them; second, performance targets for each school in the system, plus rewards for those that meet targets, probation for schools that are in trouble, and reconstitutions for those that are chronically failing our children; third, an evaluation system that bases teacher and principal evaluations on progress that the students are making; and fourth, a new student promotion policy, ensuring that students in the 3rd through 8th grade have at least basic reading skills before moving to the next higher grade. No more social promotions.

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[1] The prepared statement of Mr. MacLaury appears in the Appendix on page 83.

The key to systemwide accountability is solid, quantifiable evidence on student learning. That is why the Trustees have endorsed not only strong standards for D.C., but also a system of assessment that provides consistent, reliable data to parents, teachers and administrators.

In releasing preliminary results of last May's Stanford–9 assessments a few weeks ago, we saw the power of good data to mobilize public opinion. District residents were dismayed to know that one-third of our 3rd graders are "below basic" in both reading and math, that 29 percent of 8th graders are "below basic" in reading and that an astonishing, dismaying 72 percent of 8th graders were "below basic" in math. Citywide, grade-by-grade results will shortly be released, and shortly after that, school-by-school results.

Part of our charge from the Control Board is to direct resources to the level of individual schools. The budget we have presented takes a major step in that direction, and our academic plan envisions going further, much further. But our mandate is not simply to pour more dollars into business-as-usual schools. Over the past decade, educators have learned a great deal about what works and what does not work in education. The work of the New American Schools Development Corporation, the Edison Project, the Core Knowledge Foundation and researchers such as Bob Slavin from Johns Hopkins have provided eye-opening new approaches to the education of America's children, and those here in the District deserve those that are best.

In the coming years, we will encourage more schools to affiliate with these and other effective, research-based programs that work. But there is another way in which to encourage innovation in the District, and that is through charter schools. Although the Emergency Trustees bear no direct responsibility for chartering, we have an oversight role as the Districts State Board of Education, and our support for the charter process is strong. We are also responsible for approving policies responding to congressional directives to provide a preference for charter school operators in the disposition of excess public school property in the District.

This has not been an easy matter, because Congress has asked on the one hand that we maximize the revenues from the excess properties through sale or lease, and on the other hand, that we help make them available for charter schools. I am confident that we will be able to strike the right balance between these conflicting purposes very shortly.

I believe that charter schools are an essential component of reform, providing not only fertile ground for trying out ideas and innovations that are difficult to introduce systemwide, but providing a healthy dose of competition as well. As we try to move from a dysfunctional, monolithic school system to a lean, responsive system of schools, I believe charter schools can and will be an important asset even as we focus most of our attention on efforts to raise the standards of all of the students in the public schools.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, Mr. MacLaury, for your concise statement and for addressing some specific issues on the charter schools and on testing. The issue of testing came up earlier, and I want to explore that with you a little bit further later on.

General Becton, thank you for coming here today on the difficult assignment that you have. I look forward to your presentation and some questioning back and forth if we can have it. We welcome you to the Committee.

I might say just at the outset that during the reconciliation bill, a number of issues were passed regarding the District of Columbia. We tried to deal with the issue of economic growth by putting forward a zero capital gains on property held for 5 years, and a first-time home buyers credit in that bill, and that went through; there was a lot of focus on the crime issue and what we are doing for crime control; and we focused on prisons and the changes we are making in prisons—closing Lorton, privatizing, and trying to get some of the prisoners out of the area, which was one of the areas of concern.

It seems to me that we have hit two of the three pegs pretty hard and pretty clear lately, on growth and on crime—and we still need to do more on crime. The school peg is another clear one that we have just got to hit well to get people coming back into the District of Columbia and making it a shining example. This is just a paramount issue, and it falls squarely on your shoulders, and I know it has been a tough assignment, and I will have some pointed questions about that after your testimony.

Welcome to the Committee, and I look forward to your comments.

## TESTIMONY OF GENERAL JULIUS W. BECTON, JR.,[1] (RETIRED), CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ACCOMPANIED BY MAJOR GENERAL CHUCK WILLIAMS, (RETIRED), CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

General BECTON. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am delighted to be here.

You said you know it is a tough assignment. Let me put it this way. In my more than 50 years of public service, this is the toughest assignment I have ever had, but yet it also has, in my judgment, the potential to be the most rewarding, not from a personal standpoint, but for the ones whom we are serving. So we think we are up to the challenge.

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you to discuss our efforts to improve the District of Columbia public schools. As you have already noted, I have with me General Chuck Williams, who is the Chief Operating Officer, and he will be available to respond. I also have a number of key staffers, whom I will introduce as appropriate if there are questions that come up in their particular areas.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good.

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[1] The prepared statement of General Becton with attachments appears in the Appendix on page 88.

General **BECTON**. As you know, I became the Chief Executive Officer through an order by the Control Board. Dr. MacLaury has already identified and described that background. Let me just comment that the Control Board took this action after concluding that, "in virtually every category and for every grade level, by virtually every measure of performance, the public school system has failed to provide a quality education for all children and a safe environment in which to learn." That is a devastating comment.

Indeed, the school system was broken over time in fundamental ways. It lacked academic standards, employed uncertified teachers, could not pay its bills on time, and had crumbling facilities plagued by fire code violations. And no one was held accountable.

Today we operate in a new context of opportunity but face the challenges of past failures that mounted over many years. This new school year will be a very different one for the children and parents of the District. We expect to be held accountable for achieving our goals for them.

I believe that our success or failure will be judged on whether or not we achieve fundamental improvement in three core areas: (1) academics, (2) school facilities, and (3) personnel and financial management systems.

Our priorities in fiscal year 98 for the core area of academics are focused on accomplishing the four goals described in our draft 1-year implementation plan, which is attached to my written statement—first, improve student achievement by adopting world-class standards and providing high-quality training. Beginning this year, DCPS will have content and performance standards that define what we expect every child to learn and to be able to do.

Second, ensure quality school staff by ensuring that all teachers are qualified to teach in their subject areas and developing a corps of school leaders with skills to manage instructional and fiscal autonomy. This school year, all new DCPS teachers will enter our classrooms with the appropriate credentials to teach in the area they have been assigned. If teachers already employed by the system are not similarly credentialed, they will be removed from the work force in January of 1998.

Third, increase accountability through the school system. Starting this year, principal evaluations will be tied to growth in test scores. Schools with too many students performing below basic will be placed on probation. We are also ending social promotions. This year, if our children cannot read at a basic level in grade 3, they will not move to the next grade. In addition, we will ensure an accurate enrollment count that is audited.

And the fourth goal is to promote school restructuring, decentralization, and parental choice. This means moving more resources to the school level and giving parents greater opportunities to choose the schools their children will attend. This also means facilitating the development of charter schools that will serve as laboratories of change for the entire school system. And Dr. MacLaury has already described how we believe that that can happen.

Our priorities for the second core area, school facilities, are guided by our Long-Range Facilities Master Plan. The first phase of this plan is underway with the emergency roof replacements that are essential for schools to remain open during school year 1997–

1998. While the more than 1,600 fire code violations we have already abated would have permitted schools to open on time, we opted for a long-term solution. I cannot accept doing quick fixes and patches when we know that a roof must be replaced. In this respect, we will have all program roofs replaced and schools opened on 22 September, which is the comment I made to you as you were riding to the airport last Friday.

Regarding personnel and financial management systems, our third core area, we have made major improvements. We have verified how many staff we have and are realigning them for the fiscal year 1998 budget. For the first time, the DCPS budget will be constructed around programs—that is, budget amounts for each program will be specified, allowing us to hold managers accountable for spending. While this may sound like common sense, it represents a major accomplishment given that funds were previously commingled across programs, allowing for no accountability.

We are focusing resources at the school level. Nearly 90 percent of the FTEs will be directly assigned to schools. Our budget figures for fiscal year 1998 translate into a total per pupil expenditure of $7,271 and a local per pupil expenditure of $5,923.

In concluding my statement, I wish to take note of the frustration that has been expressed in many quarters. I too must admit that at times, I become frustrated. However, the problems were piled deep when we arrived, and many remain. My job is to look at the 3 years we have and ensure that we effectively execute the essential steps to place the school system on a firm foundation for continuous improvement. I must make the hard decisions necessary for lasting reform. You may quarrel with our pace, but I do not believe that you can quarrel with our direction or our resolve. Failure to meet the needs of the children of this city is not an option.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I am prepared to respond to any questions that you may have.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you very much, General.

The quarrel with the pace is that a child generally does not get a shot the second time at the 1st, 2nd or 3rd grade, or if they do, in many cases, there have been some failures in the system because they get this second shot.

That is why I press you all the time about how we have to move fast on this, because this child does not have a second shot at it—and I realize that you are dealing with a large institution that has lots of problems, but that drives so much of my frustration, because the child does not get a second shot.

General BECTON. I agree, and that is why we will be working very hard to start helping that youngster from pre-K, K, and through the first three grades, because we expect that literacy and reading will be paramount to what we will be doing.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good. Let me start with a series of questions if I could. First, you are saying that you will have all of the schools open on September 22.

General BECTON. We will have all roofs replaced, and we will have schools opened on September 22. If we have, say, on September 18, something like what happened to us 2 weeks ago, when someone torched one of our schools, it may be difficult to get that school opened, but that is what we are faced with.

Senator BROWNBACK. OK, but absent dramatic consequences going against you, you will have all schools open on September 22?

General BECTON. We will have all schools open on September 22.

Senator BROWNBACK. Do you still have to go through a number of repairs and clearances by the proper authorities yet on a number of these schools?

General BECTON. Yes, we do.

Senator BROWNBACK. How many schools remain that have incomplete repairs and how many need to get clearances from the proper authorities?

General BECTON. Well, the smart thing for me to do is let Chuck Williams answer that, but let me make a comment first. I was out with Chuck Williams yesterday and Saturday as they were working full-time, basically around-the-clock, repairing the schools—we will have all of the schools' roofs replaced. Following that, it is required to have a fire department inspection and then to get the judge's clearance. So the fact that we have the roofs replaced does not necessarily conclude that the process is finished.

I will ask Chuck to describe how that works.

General WILLIAMS. Good morning, Senator.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good morning.

General WILLIAMS. We expect to have all of the roofs replaced, as General Becton said, in sufficient time to open schools on September 22. There is a five-step clearance process that takes time. After the contractor represents that the building or the facility or the work is complete, we then accept the work. Then, of course, that has to be subjected to the fire department inspection, to be followed by a court date and the judge subsequently clearing it.

As of this date, we have over 75 percent of the roof replacements complete; the others are in the 80 to 90 percent completion status. So we feel very confident that the roof replacement will be done. And of course, as to the rest of the process, we are working around the clock to push those clearances as fast as we can.

Senator BROWNBACK. OK. You have a number of steps to do in a 2-week time period, so you are going to have to move, it sounds like to me, heaven and earth to get things moving along. But it has to be done.

General WILLIAMS. I understand that, Senator, and to that extent, we have set up what amounts to an emergency operation center in the field, working around the clock. We were there this weekend, as General Becton pointed out, and we are doing everything we can.

We are receiving good support from our contractors. They worked with us this weekend, realizing the problem. It was a massive undertaking, 57 roof replacements, but we are committed to getting it done.

Senator BROWNBACK. I trust, General Becton, that next year, we will not be opening the District of Columbia schools late and that they will be opened on time—have you projected when you will open them next year? Most students across the country will have been in school for a month already by the time we will be open in the District of Columbia.

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Maybe, Mr. MacLaury, that is a better question for you—I do not know.

General BECTON. No, but I will have to turn for help. What is the program date for next year? Does anyone have that information? If not, we will get it for the record.

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In general, D.C. Public School students begin school each year on the Tuesday following Labor Day.

The answer is that we have every expectation of having the schools open on time. Up until July 10, I had every expectation that schools would be open on September 2, too, until I found out that we could not have people in a building at the same time we are replacing the roof. Because we already replaced six roofs this spring with schools in session, so therein lies my ignorance that we could not do that.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, I do not know if it is the sort of thing where you can work on weekends next year to prevent this from happening next year; but it just sends a bad signal when we cannot open the schools on time.

General BECTON. Senator, believe me, there is no one in this city who is more sensitive to that fact than I. I can assure you, I am reminded of it morning, noon and night. I can also assure you that we are replacing 57 roofs, which has never been done in the history of this school system before. It could have been done with the schools open—other places do it—but we were stopped.

So yes, I made a mistake, but I think my mistake in judgment was based on the information which I had and certainly not on something that was sinister.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, I guess we will all learn from that, and next time around, it will not be a similar situation, so we can open them up in a timely fashion.

Mr. MACLAURY. Senator, there is one point that I am sure you are aware of, and that is that the schools were not able to contract with the roofers until the funds were available to them. The reputation of the District of Columbia in terms of paying its bills simply made it impossible to get any credit with contractors. And we are going to be fighting that kind of problem next year—I hope that we can handle it a lot better. The capital funds to get the roof work or other capital improvements done do not exist as we speak today. They are going to be coming out of bond issues of the District and other sources of funding. Until we have those dollars in hand and ready to spend, we cannot enter into contracts. That is not an excuse, but it is a fact.

Senator BROWNBACK. Are there things that we can do here that can help you expedite those?

Mr. MACLAURY. Well, looking at the costs that General Williams has estimated for the capital improvements for next year—Chuck, correct me if I am wrong—the total amount of the bill is something like $200 million for school year 1998. This is more money than anybody has. I think the point is only that we are going to have to be coming to the Congress as well as other places to help us with the capital funding for the District's schools.

Senator BROWNBACK. Associated with that, I am getting some questions about the cost of the roof repairs being substantially higher than what some people would project as market cost. What is the cost based on square footage to repair the roofs?

General WILLIAMS. Senator, I would be happy to respond to that. We do have a unique situation in the District of Columbia. It is running about $11 per square foot. Normally, in our neighboring communities, it is anywhere from $6 to $8. But we must understand that the District of Columbia has a set of unique features with it that impacts contractors—for example, the access to the particular site, and the degree of difficulty in trying to remove what we have to replace, because some of the roofing systems here, because of neglect and lack of attention to the problem, have been patched as many as 19 times. So it is not a simple matter of just removing what would be considered an old roof; you have to remove several. So there is a degree of difficulty.

There is the labor situation—Virginia, for example, is right to work; D.C. has the Davis-Bacon law—and then, of course, there is the bidding environment. The District of Columbia and in particular the D.C. public school system had an atrocious record on dealing with contractors. They did not pay their bills—they did not do anything. So with each one of the contractors, I went out personally and called and literally begged them to come in and try us on faith. They are doing that this time, fortunately, and we are paying them with the money we have.

So that is the difficulty, Senator; it is just that.

Senator BROWNBACK. General Becton?

General BECTON. I would like to respond to your question about what can you do to help us. If we could get a definition of fire code violations attached to our appropriations, it would sure make a difference to us, because right now, in Fairfax County, where I live and where my grandchildren go to school, they replace roofs year around. They barricade portions of a building to keep youngsters out of certain parts. We can do none of those things in the current environment in the District of Columbia.

Senator BROWNBACK. Is this because of local ordinance, or is it because of Federal law?

General BECTON. Because of a judge's decision.

Senator BROWNBACK. Interpreting local ordinance or Federal law?

General BECTON. May I ask my general counsel to respond?

Senator BROWNBACK. Please.

Please identify yourself.

Ms. WIRTZ. My name is Cecilia Wirtz, and I am general counsel for D.C. public schools. The situation which General Becton has just described is the result of a court order interpreting the local fire code law.

Senator BROWNBACK. OK. So that if we had a definition in the Federal law that would allow you to replace a roof during the time that a school is occupied, that would facilitate—or, is this a moot issue now, because you are replacing virtually all the roofs?

General BECTON. Sir, we have a lot more to go. We have a very old system, and we need the legislative relief for the future. And we are obviously concerned about safety. We are not going to violate the judge's order or put any child in jeopardy. But right now, I have not been permitted to have principals in the schools since July 11.

Senator BROWNBACK. Just because of the replacement work?

General BECTON. That is correct.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, let us work with you on that to see if we can help and facilitate that. We want to review it—obviously, I do not want to put people in an unsafe position, and neither do you, but let us see if we can help with that to prevent this from happening again.

Next, I want to probe if I could some areas that you identified, Mr. MacLaury, on testing and replacement. I have been concerned, and I do not think we are moving fast enough, because the situation is so desperate and so paramount. It just seems to me like we have got to move faster.

We had people testify ahead of you about what happened in Chicago in a similar situation, and much of this set-up system-wide here is modeled after Chicago. There, they went in rapidly and quickly and dealt with a number of situations.

We heard testimony earlier that they released 12 principals in Chicago, initially going in and that they went in and did a number of rapid changes. I do not know how many you have replaced; earlier today, I heard it was three. And I am concerned about some news accounts that the one school that had attracted so much attention because of the sexual actions by the children in the school, the principal retained his position.

What are you doing to change the personnel in schools that have not been performing?

General BECTON. Sir, let me clarify the record if I may. We did not reappoint eight principals because of their failure to do what had to be done. We placed nine principals on probation who had demonstrated potential but had not reached the standard we thought they should reach, and they will be given additional support to either succeed or fail, and we think we are going to help them to succeed. We appointed a new group of 23 principals; many of those were acting principals before, and the remainder were reappointed of the group of 146.

The principal at Winston that you mentioned paid a heavy price for his failure to follow instructions. He was not the person who permitted the activity in that classroom. He failed to follow the procedure for how you report it, who interviews whom, and the price he paid was to be right away, as I mentioned the last time I was here, suspended without pay. He remained suspended without pay until he was reappointed, and he was reappointed because of his expertise, the fact that people in the community wanted him back, the teachers wanted him back. He was a qualified principal, but he made a mistake, and he paid for it. I would do that with anyone else who made an honest mistake, not dealing with the sexual thing, but dealing with procedure.

Senator BROWNBACK. So you have not hired 8, you have 9 on probation and 23 new ones in a total system of how many principals?

General BECTON. One hundred forty-six.

Senator BROWNBACK. One hundred forty-six total.

And what about teachers—what have you done in that category?

General BECTON. I will have to get the numbers. We have hired in excess of 500 teachers. May I provide that for the record?

Senator BROWNBACK. Please, or if you have someone there who can answer, if they could come forward and identify themselves.

General BECTON. Yes. This is Shelia Graves, the chief human resource officer.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good. How many?

Ms. GRAVES. As of last Friday, 550 new teachers.

Senator BROWNBACK. Five hundred fifty new teachers out of a total of how many?

General BECTON. Five thousand three hundred forty-three, or something like that.

Ms. GRAVES. About 5,400.

Senator BROWNBACK. How many wanted to be rehired and were not because of evaluations in the system? Can you give me that?

Ms. GRAVES. I can tell you that there were about four who were not rehired because of positive TB tests, and three more were not hired or terminated after rehiring because of negative background information.

General BECTON. That is from a personnel standpoint. I would like to provide that specific information for the record.

Senator BROWNBACK. How many were not rehired because of competency or just not producing the results?

General BECTON. That is what I would like to provide for the record.

Senator BROWNBACK. Yes, please, if you would.

[Information follows:]

INSERT FOR THE RECORD

"No teacher has been dismissed on the basis of poor performance since this administration was put into place in November 1996. However, several have been terminated for cause for other reasons, which are discussed above. Beginning in the current school year, DCPS principals, who are directly responsible for supervising and evaluating teachers, will be subject to a new evaluation system through which they will specifically be held accountable for their performance in this area. Under the new system, principals will be evaluated on the basis of five criteria. The first and most important criterion, of course, is academic achievement. Two of the other five criteria—human resource management and leadership—speak to the issue of selecting and developing quality staff, providing staff development where needed, and using the teacher evaluation process to weed out those teachers who should not be in our classrooms. The new system is being communicated to principals now and will be implemented system wide this school year."

Senator BROWNBACK. OK, because it does not sound like you have any or very many for those reasons, for competency, and I want to check on that.

General BECTON. I go back to the statement I made at the opening about holding people accountable. We really had no accountability on the part of the teachers or the principals when they arrived, and we are establishing that now. Part of the baseline for that will be our test scores that Dr. MacLaury mentioned. We now have a base from which we can measure the teachers as to how well they are doing. And those teachers who can demonstrate through their students that they are competent will be continued; those teachers who cannot, we are holding the principals directly accountable for their teachers and holding the principals accountable for what happens inside the classrooms in terms of academic standards.

Senator BROWNBACK. How long will a teacher have to produce whatever you determine as adequate test scores from the students? Will they have 1 year?

General BECTON. It will be 1 year, because we tested in May, and the results will be given to the principals, and we will also have results for the students, the teachers and the schools. That information will be made available to them when they start on September 22. We will test again next May. We therefore have it benchmarked at a point which they may have reached.

Senator BROWNBACK. What will be a failing benchmark, or have you established that yet?

General BECTON. We just brought on today our chief academic officer, and I really do not want to put her on the spot——

Senator BROWNBACK. This is a good way to welcome her—putting her in front of a Subcommittee.

General BECTON. No, I am not going to put her before you. The point is that I want to really sit down and work with her before we give you something definitive. I can assure you that we will have a way to measure that.

Senator BROWNBACK. There was concern in the last panel that you are not testing enough on the basics, that you are doing one set of standardized tests, but in Chicago, they had more testing along the lines—if I am getting my testimony correct—of reading and mathematics. Are you putting in more testing requirements, Dr. MacLaury?

Mr. MACLAURY. Again, General Becton will be able to answer, but the fact is that this past year, the Stanford–9 test was given. It was given in math, it was given in reading, across a number of grades. Therefore, we have now, as of May, baseline data which will be available—within the next month or so—school-by-school, and indeed, child-by-child. The purpose of tests is not to fail children, obviously, but to assist them and to help provide teachers with the kind of knowledge their classes need.

I believe, personally—and I am not an expert in this area—that the Stanford–9 tests, which are nationally-normed, and competency-based, give us a profile for each class of "below basic," "basic," "proficient," and "advanced," so that teachers will know that information and, more to the point, be able to work with their students. I think we have the tools now for the first time to use for diagnostic and instructional purposes. I do not think we need more.

Senator BROWNBACK. Was May the first time those have been conducted in the D.C. public schools?

Mr. MACLAURY. For 13 years, the CTBS, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, was used, and I am told that exactly the same exam was given year after year after year, so that it was compromised, and, from my point of view, useless.

General BECTON. May I point out that we are starting out with basic skills of math and reading, and in the testing that Bruce mentioned, in reading, we tested grades 1st through 11th; in mathematics, we tested grades 3rd, 6th, 8th and 10th.

Senatcr **BROWNBACK**. And you will be releasing those grade-by-grade and school-by-school?

General **BECTON**. And child-by-child——

Mr. **MACLAURY**. No, not child-by-child; school-by-school.

General **BECTON**. No, I did not mean they would be released child-by-child, but that information will be available.

Senator **BROWNBACK**. I understand—to the parents——

General **BECTON**. To the teachers.

Senator **BROWNBACK** [continuing]. Teachers and parents. And you will be releasing that information when?

Ms. **JONES**. I am the interim and acting chief academic officer, Helena Jones just identified—in about 3 weeks.

Senator **BROWNBACK**. Very good. I think that that is critical to have out and in the public for people to be able to see—is the school my child is going to succeeding or failing?

General **BECTON**. We agree.

Senator **BROWNBACK**. To me, it is like going into a grocery store and seeing what is in the product. We require that adequate labeling. I think this is a basic, and I am delighted to hear that you are getting it out there. And I think that at first, there is going to be a lot of screaming about it, but my goodness, this is just basic information that people need to have to be able to exercise their choice within the D.C. public schools and asking, "do I want to go somewhere else"—and for you to be able to evaluate.

General **BECTON**. We are trying to set the standards and provide the information which will cause the public to recognize that we are making a difference. But there will be a large hue and cry come next May, when a number—which will surprise people—of youngsters do not pass because they have not mastered the skills to get beyond third grade.

What we intend to do, about halfway through this school year, is to let the parents know, based upon the teacher's assessment, where that child may be, so that the parents can do more to help their children.

Senator **BROWNBACK**. So you look for potentially a number of children not to pass this year.

General **BECTON**. If what has been stated in the past is correct, yes—not because we were not making the effort, but because there are some people, including parents and community, who I suspect are sitting back and saying, "I have heard that before; there they go." We are going to hold to those standards.

Senator **BROWNBACK**. Good. I think you should. We have to establish standards and live by them. I think it also applies for teachers, and I hope you put teachers to a high standard and require that they meet that, or adverse actions will occur.

General **BECTON**. I think you can rest assured that that is going to happen.

Senator **BROWNBACK**. Good, because I look at each of these children as you do. Each is a precious life, and they are entitled to every possibility they can have. We cannot fail them by having a systems failure taking place. And I realize that what you are proposing can be pretty harsh on teachers, on principals, possibly on the social standing, I guess you could put it, of some students if they are not passing on through and the rest of their grade goes, but I think you have to establish good, strong standards and then stand by them.

General BECTON. On a personal note, we have five grown children in my family. All five went to school in the District of Columbia. Two of them graduated, and of course, my movement in and out caused some of them not to go completely through. I have 10 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. Believe me, I am very sensitive to the subject of education for our youngsters.

Mr. MACLAURY. And I think, Mr. Chairman, if I may, that one of the keys is not just the testing and the standards, it is how much support the schools can provide. You cited Chicago. They, too, have gone to a "no social promotion" policy, and they have had summer school as a fallback. Youngsters in certain grades who do not get through the gates are required to go to summer school. We are going to have to do the same thing. It is costly. The real test is not how many failed, but how many you can bring to success. That is what this game is about.

Senator BROWNBACK. Will you be providing summer schools next summer?

General BECTON. We will be providing summer schools. We will also be providing Saturday academics for those who we identify need additional help. We have tutors and mentors who will be helping out. We have, to borrow an expression, a "full court press" to make that happen. But it is also going to take parental involvement and community involvement to make it happen so that every child has that chance.

Senator BROWNBACK. On charter schools, Dr. MacLaury, you testified as to your support for charter schools. We have gotten a little conflicting testimony today on the number that have been opened in the District of Columbia. Someone said four, somebody else said two.

Mr. MACLAURY. My understanding, Senator, is that the previous elected school board granted charters to I believe five schools. Of those, only two opened this past year. Two more of those five are, I believe, intending to open this fall, and I think the fifth has withdrawn, but I am not sure about that. There were only two operating charter schools this past year.

Senator BROWNBACK. And some suggestions that one needs to be closed. Do you have any comment regarding that?

Mr. MACLAURY. That is an issue for the elected school board which chartered that school, the Marcus Garvey School. The school board chartered that school last year, and the school board has to make a tough decision on whether to keep that school in operation.

Senator BROWNBACK. It strikes me that it has been awfully slow going on the charter schools. Some people looked up how many Chicago has, and they have 10 charter schools in Chicago, where the law passed at the same time as the D.C. Charter School law. And I do not know the size, the scale, the scope of those schools.

I continue to receive a substantial number of complaints that the bureaucracy is trying to crush the charter school movement in the District of Columbia, that they are being crushed by the system, they are not being approved on time, they are not being supported.

Dr. MacLaury, you opened with a strong statement of support for charter schools. We had testimony earlier that we need to establish time lines and baselines for the establishment of charter schools, and Jeanne Allen suggested that we should have 20 open by the fall of 1998. I do not know which of you would care to respond to those statements as far as what you would like to see happen to move the charter school movement along a little more aggressively.

General BECTON. I would like to make a statement, and then I would like the person who used to be on that side, not working for us, to comment as to where the charter schools are today—that is Rich Wenning.

The charter approval cycle is underway. The public charter board developed an excellent application, and proposals are due September 15. The approval cycle is off to a much better start than last year, and we expect 10 to 20 schools to be approved between November and January.

We are setting up a revolving loan fund with a $200,000 annual contribution. We are seeking additional start-up funding for charter schools. We requested a $6 million grant from the Department of Education, and I'll ask Rich, if I may, to explain where we are beyond that point.

Senator BROWNBACK. Please.

General BECTON. Richard?

Senator BROWNBACK. And please identify yourself for the record.

Mr. WENNING. I am Richard Wenning, Director of Policy for the D.C. Public Schools, and I handle charter schools. A lot of folks are frustrated by the pace. The charter schools in the District of Columbia are very much in their infancy. Things got off to a rocky start last year, as you know. This year, things are moving along quite well. As General Becton said, the Public Charter Board does have an outstanding application together. They will be approving schools in November, so during the November to January time line, we are probably looking at about 10 to 20 charter approvals, and we are going to continue to facilitate that process. With the start-up funds that we will be getting from the Department of Education, we will be able to provide funds early to charter schools, before September, so they have some money to hire staff with and get started. In addition, the revolving loan fund is going to provide some additional funds as well.

We are laying new groundwork at DCPS with charter schools. Implementing a congressional law is difficult, and we are putting together the guidance to do that, and we are confident that we are going to have a good chartering process this year.

Senator BROWNBACK. So you think that you will be somewhere between how many charter schools next fall?

Mr. WENNING. Between 10 and 20.

Senator BROWNBACK. Ten and 20 charter schools approved next year. It seems to me that you have the opportunity for some grand charter schools in the District of Columbia, given some of the institutions that are here. I do not know if they are willing to do it, but a National Geographic Society-associated charter school would be a pretty interesting place, with a lot of selling power to it, I would think.

Are you getting some proposals along those types of lines?

Mr. WENNING. I have not heard from National Geographic. But it is important to note that, of course, the two chartering authorities may also be getting information from some of these organizations. We have had some conversations with the Smithsonian. There is a great deal of interest; there are great resources in this city. What is very important, though, is that all the applications for charters go through a rigorous review process to ensure that we have high-quality schools approved, with accompanying strong oversight.

Senator BROWNBACK. Do we need to establish some time lines for the approval process, or are these pretty firm ones that you have given me today of times and numbers for approval?

Mr. WENNING. Well, there are time lines in the current statute, and the Public Charter Board had some difficulty getting started; I know they have submitted some language to the appropriators and I believe to your staff. And I think that with a few tweaks, the schedule should work quite well.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good. Thank you very much.

General BECTON. Mr. Chairman, it sounds as though there may be an impression that DCPS controls this process—and we really do not. Maybe we need to clarify the fact that the Trustees and DCPS do not approve charter schools. That is done by the chartering agency, and there are two of those.

Senator BROWNBACK. The point in raising it here is that if we have to do something to make sure that the bureaucracy does not kill this, then I am going to be looking at doing that. I think this is an important concept; it is one that you are supportive of. In operating the current system, if there are difficulties in doing that, or the bureaucracy is, for whatever reason, causing slowness in it, then maybe we need to engage and force that along more.

General BECTON. I would encourage that at least consideration be given to expanding in legislation my role as the chief State education officer. I have four titles, and that is one of them. In every State, there is a person or a board that has responsibility to ensure monitoring and to ensure certification and all those things that are important so that they all comply with the same single requirement.

Today we have the public charter agency and the D.C. Board of Education, which also has charter responsibility. And technically, while I have stated we are the State education officer, it would be helpful if there were some legislation clearly charging me with that responsibility. We might therefore be able to do what you would like to see done.

Senator BROWNBACK. That is a good proposal. We will look at that and see if it is something that would help move that process further along. There is going to be legislation coming forward on D.C. public schools regarding the scholarship program that Senators Coats, Lieberman and myself have introduced here. As you know, that does not take any funds away from the D.C. public schools, but provides it in addition to, and Representative Armey testified earlier today about that as a concept that would be offered to certain income categories of students.

We believe strongly that competition is an important factor, and that choice is important, too, and that this can be a positive step forward. I hope you will look at those as just that—this is what we are trying to do to provide additional options for people who frequently cannot afford them. Most Members of Congress—I should not say "most"—but many Members of Congress take their children to private schools, and they have that option because of their income category, whereas a lot of people in the District of Columbia do not, and we feel like they should have that available.

So it is not a statement toward you, but it is a statement to the kids, to try to provide some of those options for them. I hope you will be able and willing to work with that system where we are able to get it in place as a scholarship program.

General BECTON. Well, obviously, Mr. Chairman, we will work with whatever law comes out. I think we are the only school board that you have to tell what to do——

Senator BROWNBACK. That is true.

General BECTON [continuing]. So clearly, we understand where the money comes from. But let me point out, sir, that we have not developed a position on the legislation—when I say "we," I am talking about the Board of Trustees, wearing another hat that I wear—but I do have one or two concerns. I am charged with the responsibility for the education for all of our children—not 4,000, 400, or whatever may benefit from the scholarships, but all of them. My concern is that when you say, grant scholarships, vouchers, whatever you want to call them, to a group, I still have to raise the standards of those left behind. So I hope that you can understand that as I deal with all of the students, that is my primary concern. Last week, a member of the House Subcommittee, Duke Cunningham, asked me the question, "Could you support a bill that was the result of a referendum that the public voted to go vouchers." Obviously, if the public says that is what they want, we have no choice but to do that. But right now, I am still faced with raising the education standards for all of our students.

Senator BROWNBACK. And that is what all of us want to do. Some may look at it and say this does not do it; others may say competition has been such a key factor in the U.S., in making this a great Nation, that it should apply as well in public education and that that is what we are about. Representative Armey testified earlier, saying that is exactly what it is about—it is about raising the whole—it is about a rising tide lifting all ships and having competition being a key force in doing that. That is the basis of that scholarship program.

I personally would like to see just a wide open school choice program, where the child and his parents decide where they would like to go to school, and the public schools be in such a position that they are so competitive and so good that, by and large, that is the place chosen. That is what I would like to see.

General BECTON. And we want to make it very tough for that parent to make up his mind because our schools have reached the standard that they would consider that, hey, this is not a bad idea.

Senator BROWNBACK. We want to push that day as quick as possible, just so that more and more children get a higher and higher quality of education because there is competition within the system to try to encourage that.

General BECTON. Yes.

Senator BROWNBACK. So you are going to continue to see moves out of this Congress to do that, whether it is a scholarship program, trying to open up to full school choice, a voucher type of system, because that is the way that child then chooses. And I hope you are in a position where the D.C. public schools get the vast majority of students because they say these are the best schools. That is what we all want.

General BECTON. We are striving for that.

Senator BROWNBACK. And we are going to keep pushing you on it, too.

Dr. MacLaury.

Mr. MACLAURY. Mr. Chairman, I think both of us here share your belief in competition and in choice for the schools. There is now choice among public schools, as you know. And from my point of view, personally, giving the charter effort the biggest opportunity to get underway and get going is where my emphasis would be with respect to this element of choice. I do not want a distraction from another kind of effort.

My concern is also that there needs to be a different, separate administration for the awarding of these scholarships if that comes to pass. The public schools should not have anything to do with the awarding of those scholarships. I think that is an issue—administratively, how many different kinds of choice can the District and its administrative units cope with. That is something that at least I would like to keep in mind.

Senator BROWNBACK. It is a fair point. It is just that the school system is in such meltdown that there need to be some radical and quick changes.

Mr. MACLAURY. Yes, I understand.

Senator BROWNBACK. And General, I appreciate your identifying this as the toughest assignment you have ever had. I believe it is, and you have got to succeed—you have got to.

General BECTON. My last statement, sir, was that failure is not an option.

Senator BROWNBACK. Very good. Thank you all for coming and joining us today. We may well try to have another hearing in 6 months or so to monitor the progress that is coming along, and we will keep working for the good of the kids.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

## APPENDIX

# District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997

H.R. 1797, S. 847

## *Summary*

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# *Introduction*

In February of this year, *The Washington Post* ran a five-part series on the D.C. public schools, chronicling their complete breakdown. This series exposed a school system where jobs for bureaucrats are more important than providing textbooks. A school system that employs almost two times more central office administrators than the national average, despite a decreasing student population and a shortage of qualified teachers and principals. A school system that is literally falling apart, where students must try to learn in buildings beset with leaking roofs, bitterly cold classrooms, and thousands of fire code violations.

Tragically, these fundamental problems with the infrastructure and administration of the system are minor concerns compared to the violence and across-the-board academic failure of the D.C. public schools. Students are routinely promoted regardless of whether they have progressed in their studies and graduate from the school system with little to show for their 12 years of schooling. Eighty-five percent of D.C. public school graduates who enter the University of the District of Columbia need two years of remedial education before beginning their course work toward degrees. And more than half of all graduates who took the U.S. Armed Forces Qualification Test in 1994 failed.

A major reason these schools are failing is that many of them are simply not safe. The National Education Goals Panel reported last year that both students and teachers in District schools are subjected to levels of violence that are twice the national average. The violence is such a pervasive presence, in fact, that nearly two-thirds of D.C. teachers said in a survey that violent student behavior is a serious impediment to teaching.

This failure is why House Majority Leader Richard Armey (R-TX), Rep. William Lipiniski (D-IL), Sen. Dan Coats (R-IN) and Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-CT) have introduced legislation that is aimed at directly addressing the need to provide relief to the most disadvantaged children. The District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act (H.R. 1797, S.847) would provide tuition scholarships to about 2,000 low-income students in the District of Columbia to enable them to attend the public or private school of their choice. This bipartisan legislation would also provide extra tutoring assistance to 2,000 public school students.

Specifically, the bill provides opportunity scholarships for grades K through 12 for District residents whose family incomes are below 185 percent of the poverty level. The scholarships may be used for tuition costs at a public or private school in D.C. and adjacent counties in Maryland and Virginia. Students whose family incomes are below the poverty line may receive a scholarship of up to $3,200. Students whose family incomes are above the poverty line but below 185 percent of the poverty level may receive the lesser of 75 percent of tuition or $2,400. Students receiving tutoring assistance are eligible for up to $500.

The scholarship legislation would allow low-income parents to choose the best schools for their children. Many private schools that operate in the same neighborhoods with the same student population as public schools are succeeding while the public schools are failing. Providing low-income parents with the means to send their children to the best possible school will improve the education of the children who receive scholarships, and will likely improve public schools as well. When public schools are forced to compete for students, they will overcome bureaucratic inertia and improve. According to a recent *Washington Post* article, a local Bethesda public high school strengthened its curriculum in order to "woo [back to public school] private school students searching for a rigorous educational experience."

Recent evidence shows that allowing parents the opportunity to choose the best school for their children is effective in improving academic performance. According to a study by Jay P. Greene, of the University of Houston, and Paul E. Peterson, of Harvard University, students participating in the Milwaukee school choice program showed significant improvements in their academic performance. A study by Cecilia E. Rouse, of Princeton University, found that Milwaukee school choice students substantially increased their mathematics scores.

Not surprisingly, opportunity scholarships are extremely popular among parents whose children attend unsafe, failing schools. According to a survey of Washington, D.C. residents conducted by The Polling Company and the Global Strategy Group, a scholarship program enjoys strong support from those who would benefit most from such a program. The survey found that 61 percent of single parents believe a scholarship program for low-income parents is an "excellent" or "good" use of tax dollars while only 25 percent believe it is a "poor" use. Similarly, 59 percent of low-income respondents — those whose children would be eligible for the program — support it while only 17 percent oppose it. Fully 50 percent of parents with children in public schools and 48 percent of all African-Americans support the program while 25 percent and 29 percent, oppose, respectively.

The results of the recent survey of District residents are consistent with what many other polls have found. An April 1996 national poll by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington, D.C. think tank, found that 61 percent of African-American parents support school choice.

There is more evidence than just polling data that shows parents want the opportunity to enroll their children in the best schools. The Washington Scholarship Fund, which offers partial scholarships to about 230 low-income D.C. residents, has 800 children on its waiting list. (In New York City, about 23,000 students recently applied for 1,300 scholarships.) If the funds were available, hundreds of low-income families would have already opted out of failing schools. The D.C. Student Opportunity Scholarship Act provides those funds and is a lifeline of hope for the thousands of D.C. parents waiting for an opportunity to give their children a solid education and the chance to succeed.

## *Bill Summary: H.R. 1797, S. 847*

### Opportunity Scholarships

The bill provides opportunity scholarships for grades K through 12 for District residents whose family incomes are below 185 percent of the poverty level. The scholarships may be used for tuition costs at a public or private school in D.C. and adjacent counties in Maryland and Virginia. Scholarships are also available for tutoring assistance for students who attend public school in the District.

### District of Columbia Scholarship Corporation

The legislation creates a seven-member private, nonprofit corporation to administer the scholarship program. One board member is to be appointed by the mayor of Washington, D.C. and the remaining six are to be appointed by the President—three from a list of nominees submitted by the Speaker of the House and three from a list provided by the Majority Leader of the Senate (both in consultation with the minority). The board members must be residents of D.C. and may not work for either the federal or D.C. government.

### Eligibility

Students whose family incomes are below the poverty line may receive a scholarship of up to $3,200. Students whose family incomes are above the poverty line but below 185 percent of the poverty level may receive the lesser of 75 percent of tuition or $2,400. Students receiving tutoring assistance are eligible for up to $500. These figures are indexed to inflation.

If there are not sufficient funds available for all the eligible applicants, scholarships are to be awarded randomly. The corporation is required, to the extent practicable, to award an equal number of tuition scholarships and scholarships for tutoring fees.

Private schools accepting tuition scholarship students are required to abide by anti-discrimination and health and safety laws, and charge the same tuition to scholarship recipients that is charged to other students.

### Funding

The bill authorizes $7 million for fiscal year 1998, $8 million for FY 1999, and $10 million each year for FY 2000 through FY 2002. At these funding levels, approximately 2,000 students will receive tuition scholarships and an equal number of students will receive tutoring assistance.

## *The District's Failing Schools*

**"A Well Financed Failure."** According to *The Washington Post*, the District school system is "a well-financed failure." Despite spending about $7,500 per student, 65 percent of all D.C. public school children test below their grade levels. In 1994, 72 percent of fourth-graders in D.C. public schools tested below "basic proficiency" on the National Assessment of Education Progress — worse than any other school system in the nation. As a result, the D.C. Control Board took the drastic step of creating an independent board of trustees to manage the public schools.

**D.C. Diploma Means Little.** Eighty-five percent of D.C. public school graduates who enter the University of the District of Columbia need remedial education before beginning their course work toward degrees. On average, these students require two years of remedial education to get up-to-speed, up from one year during the late 1970s. In 1994, 56 percent of D.C. public school graduates who took the U.S. Armed Forces Qualification Test — a vocational aptitude exam — scored below 50 percent, a failing grade.

**Money for Salaries, Not for Kids.** In apparent violation of federal law, the D.C. school system kept two sets of books in order to spend more on personnel than the budget allowed. During the past few years, the school system has employed between 900 and 1,400 more people than were authorized. The D.C. public schools employ a central office administrator for every 20 teachers. The national average is one administrator for every 38 teachers.

## *Low-Income Parents Support Scholarships*

**If Money Was Not an Issue...** In a recent poll, nearly two-thirds (64%) of D.C. residents indicated that if money were not an issue, they would send their children to a private school.

**Low-Income Parents Support Scholarships.** By a 44 to 31 margin, District residents believe providing scholarships to low-income residents is a good use of taxpayer dollars. Among families earning less than $25,000, 59 percent support the program, while just 17 percent oppose it. African-Americans support the idea of a scholarship program by a 48 to 29 margin. Opposition is highest among families who earn $60,000 or more, most of whom already send their children to private schools.

**Voting With Their Feet.** The Washington Scholarship Fund, which offers partial scholarships to about 230 low-income D.C. residents, has 800 children on its waiting list. (In New York City, about 23,000 students recently applied for 1,300 scholarships.) Moreover, thousands of families have left the District (or never moved in) because of the poor condition of the D.C. public school system.

## Questions and Answers

**Question:** ***Doesn't the scholarship bill drain D.C. public schools of the resources they desperately need?***

**Answer:** No. The legislation wouldn't take one dime away from D.C. public schools. The funding for this proposal would *not* come out of the District school budget. In fact, under the bill, per-student spending for public schools will increase because the budget will remain the same, but there will be 2,000 fewer students in the schools.

**Question:** ***Isn't the amount of the scholarship too small for parents to afford to send their children to all but a handful of schools?***

**Answer:** Absolutely not. The amount of the scholarship is enough to provide parents a wide selection of schools, including Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, and non-religious private schools. There are 88 private schools within the Washington Beltway that cost less than $4,000 per student, including 60 that cost less than $3,200.

**Question:** ***Isn't it unconstitutional and bad public policy to support religious schools with taxpayer dollars?***

**Answer:** The bill does not give any taxpayer funds to schools, religious or otherwise. It provides scholarships to parents. Parents decide where the funds go. The Supreme Court has held that as long as beneficiaries decide where education funds are spent on their behalf and as long as the program does not help or hinder a particular religion, public funds can be spent by beneficiaries in religious institutions.

**Question:** ***Won't private schools just cherry-pick the brightest students and leave the public schools with the students who need the most help?***

**Answer:** The scholarships do not go to schools. They are awarded to parents. The parents decide where the children go, so the parents will cherry-pick the best schools. With regard to which children get scholarships, the legislation requires that they be awarded randomly, so neither the scholarship board nor the schools would be able to pick just the brightest students.

**Question:** ***Under the bill, won't schools be able to discriminate against African-American children or against other groups the legislation doesn't protect?***

**Answer:** No. The bill specifically states that any school participating in the program may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin. It also reaffirms that participating schools must abide by health and safety laws that already apply to them. Finally, the legislation is consistent with the new IDEA law, which guarantees the right of disabled students to receive a free and appropriate public education.

**Question:** ***What accountability is there in this program? Since the bill imposes no rules or standards, how can we be sure that student performance will improve?***

**Answer:** There are currently students attending private schools and public schools in the District, and there is ample evidence demonstrating which students are getting a better education. Nearly three-quarters of fourth-graders in D.C. public schools recently tested below "basic proficiency" on the National Assessment of Education Progress, the worst performance in the nation. Fully 85 percent of public school graduates who enter the University of the District of Columbia require remedial education before beginning their course work toward their degree. On average, they require two years of remedial courses. The burden is on those who would deny parents the opportunity to have an alternative to a system that is among the worst in the nation to explain how children could be worse off by having the opportunity to go to a different school.

In addition, the bill includes the best system of accountability that exists — parents. The parents who care enough about their children to apply for the scholarship are not going put them in worse schools. And they most certainly are going to monitor the progress of their children and change schools if they aren't satisfied.

**Question:** ***How is this scholarship program any different from a voucher?***

**Answer:** Under a traditional voucher approach, school funding follows the child. If the child goes to a private school, the per capita amount spent on his behalf, or some portion of it, follows him to the private school. Under the bill, the public school system funding is unchanged if a child leaves the public school. A totally separate program is being created, which does not draw resources from the school budget, that provides a scholarship to qualifying children. In addition, the scholarship board is a public-private partnership under which private donations can supplement the activities of the board.

**Question:** ***Isn't the legislation a violation of home rule? Shouldn't education policy be under local control?***

**Answer:** Congress has a constitutional authority in the affairs of the District, including education policy. Moreover, no district resident is forced to apply for a scholarship; nothing is being imposed on anyone. If every resident is satisfied with their child's school, no scholarship will be awarded. However, a recent poll shows that by a 44 to 31 percent margin, District residents believe providing scholarships to low-income residents is a good use of taxpayer dollars. Among families earning less than $25,000, 59 percent support the program, while just 17 percent oppose it. African-Americans support the idea of a scholarship program by a 48 to 29 margin. Opposition is highest among families who earn $60,000 or more, most of whom already send their children to private schools.

**Question:** ***How are the kids going to obtain transportation to school?***

**Answer:** There are more than three dozen private schools that cost less than $4,000 and another 50 outside of the District but inside the Beltway. There are 14 schools in Southeast, 10 in Northeast and 14 in Northwest that charge less than $4,000. There are plenty of schools where children live. Moreover, 230 students receive scholarships from the Washington Scholarship Fund (and another 800 are on a waiting list), and the parents of these children are willing and able to overcome the logistical obstacles to sending their children to a private school.

THE Center for Education Reform

# TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## PROGRESS REPORT ON REFORMS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BY JEANNE ALLEN, PRESIDENT
THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION REFORM

SEPTEMBER 8, 1997

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee:

The quest for charter schools in the District of Columbia remains slow and encumbered by bureaucratic foot-dragging. The lack of a clear vision by officials in charge of what charters can do for DC school children has deterred all but the most tenacious individuals. No less than four major business and civic groups have been working full-time to clear hurdles and send positive signs of encouragement throughout the city. For an area with the second strongest law in the land, the dearth of charter applicants and action is appalling and certainly not Congress' intent.

Meanwhile, not two hours away by plane stands a shining example of urban education reform. Chicago, Illinois was plagued by problems wore than the District's. Their major legislation replaced the ineffective school board with a CEO and Board of Trustees and gave them four years to turn around a city where the dropout rate hovers around fifty percent. Chronic truancy is two times the state average.

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Not two years after the changes were made, the new Trustees have fired twelve principals from schools with poor academic results, and placed another 28 schools with low achievement on notice. CEO Paul Vallas required all staff at seven deeply troubled schools to reapply for their jobs on June 25. Many were not hired back.

In addition, Chicago trustees began its reform effort with a back-to-basics push and a requirement that early reading instruction emphasize phonics. Homework is required — the higher the grade, the more homework — and social promotion is now prohibited. This past summer, thousands of children were required to attend summer school to make up for deficiencies before they could be passed on to the next grade.

Vallas also created 26 new schools for troubled youth, and established a teachers' academy to train staff. Financially, the new governance structure has tackled Chicago's mismanagement and fiscal woes, and are on track at retiring its $1.3 billion deficit by 2000. Finally, utilizing the best of the private sector, the CEO hired private contractors to do maintenance work, cutting 1,000 jobs. Work orders completed rose from 2,100 annually to 16,000. Now they will shift to giving building principals their own money to keep up their schools. Fraud and waste are down, any felons working in the schools are nearly gone, and much has been accomplished across the board on behalf of the 424,000 students that attend Chicago schools.

On top of all that, the city has authorized 10 of the 15 charter schools permitted by law, and embraced them with lots of energy, support and assistance. Illinois passed its law in 1996, along side of DC the same year. In addition, in only 12 months high standards and tests became a staple for all Chicago school children. Using inner city Catholic schools as a template to follow, schools CEO Paul Vallas borrowed some tried and true practices and is using them successfully. Since 1996, achievement indications suggest a 13 point rise in math, 4 points in English, and slight growth in elementary reading scores, which in an area that has only declines for years is a big statement.

In Chicago, there were no delays in repairing dilapidated buildings. It was one of the first orders of business in 1995, and by 1996, many of the most serious safety infractions were fixed. Is it any wonder that a district the size of Chicago, with 550 schools, can make progress when it permits itself to hire any number of private contractors? It also pays its bill on time; a condition that apparently is not the case here, and was a factor in discouraging qualified contractors to step forward and seek contracts with DCPS.

Just six months ago, I shared with you my frustration over the pace of already enacted school reform. As an observer with a wide and deep knowledge of reforms at play throughout the country, I recommended that some timelines be established for officials to carry out the intent of the charter law. I spoke of the unparalleled potential for dramatic improvement that charters are bringing to children everywhere. Yet while over 150,000 children started off to about 750 charter schools around the country last week, the District still has only four charters, two which are new, one of which should have been closed long ago and one who has struggled for every penny and ounce of freedom, otherwise guaranteed to her school by law.

An acquaintance who worked briefly at the DCPS recently remarked to me that he had gone in as an avid defender of the system as is, and left reluctantly endorsing full-scale vouchers. While I for one offer unconditional support for aiding low-income children with real choices, I'm not sure that drawing that support from an experience with an ineffective bureaucracy is how I'd like to find compatriots. For if that is the impact the central district has in its bright-eyed employees (and it does so every day), how can it every be assured that any reform, no matter how mandated, is followed and carried through?

The DC Public Charter School Coalition has recommended several steps to Congress to ensure parity and equity for charter schools. Each recommendation is sound and should be enacted. They are appended to my testimony.

But I go further and suggest that unless Congress make further demands and squelch the ability of the Board and the school system to suck the life out of this critical education reform, we'll be having this same conversation next year. As we have seen in countless other states, if the people controlling the purse are not advocates and are not charged with fulfilling the law with appropriate oversight, then little will be done to effect the charter schools.

Take, for example, the fact that the DC Public Charter School Coalition "for months has been attempting to negotiate with DCPS officials a definition and implementation of the 'preference' provision in the existing law which provides that charter schools be given a preference when deciding how to dispose of surplus school property". Why does such negotiation take months if (a) existing law uses the term preference to denote just that — over all others, and (b) if the DCPS supports these efforts?

The answer, on one level, is most likely that DCPS has been wedded to doing business as usual for too long. There is no reason to make charters happen, and the concept that one must do things differently to ensure freedom in charter schools---and efficient, direct funding--is not grasped by a bureaucracy that is not, by its nature, dynamic.

And why did it take more than six months for one of the only two charter schools in DC last year to get a portion of the federal-charter school grant money. Six months, countless meetings, media attention, and constant badgering...is this what we want for DC school children?

In Chicago, the Trustees have fully-established, well published timelines and goals. The Legislature has assigned people to work hands-on with the Trustees, to offer support as well as hold accountable those now in power. Part of this about, to be sure, personalities. But it is also about having a fixed set of goals and being forced to stick to them. You cannot turn around a city with the severe problems of DC with doing so.

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My recommendations to the distinguished Committee members, in addition to those of the District Public Charter School Coalition, are as follows:

1. Convene a Congressional briefing session for the Public Charter School Board, General Becton and staff, and the Board of Trustees, by leaders of the dozen or so states where charters are prospering and flourishing. This education process is essential to knowing how best to navigate the waters, and how to resist the temptation to move slowly.

2. Enact measures, requirements and timelines similar to those that are paving the way for dramatic reform in Chicago.

3. As I recommended in April, 1997, require 100% of per pupil funding to be disbursed in four payments starting thirty days prior to the charter schools opening. Congress can make special allocations for DC charter schools using prior year funding formulas. Also require that special education moneys bypass the District completely and go from the US Department of Education to the charter school.

4. Assign a senior level Congressional staff person to attend and monitor all charter school policy meetings, and serve as the liaison with the civic resource groups. This person would ensure that the Congressional intent of the law was being fulfilled, and the DCPS would know clearly that Congress was aware of its various moves.

5. Finally, establish a separate State Education Agency (SEA) for the District. Currently, the District's unique positioning makes it both city and state for purposes of federal programs. Having the charter program and its moneys administered by the DCPS as a local education agency (LEA) creates a conflict of interest with the (SEA), or, itself. Specifically, an SEA would undertake all educational planning and supervise facilities, distribution of federal programs and the like. The LEA would be run with a superintendent that is local only. Perhaps recommendation number 2, to create a Chicago-like reform effort here, could be used as a model in establishing this separate authority base.

Make no mistake; I do not question the intentions or motivations of General Becton and his staff. It is clear, however, that the priorities of DCPS are not consistent with fundamental education reform, and that foot-dragging and delays will continue on every education measure unless and until the control is re-established. This is no doubt an issue for the Board of Trustees, but as Congress created the Board, so must Congress amend its plan if it fails to develop as originally enacted.

Thank you.

# D.C. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COALITION

**MEMBERS**

**AppleTree Institute**
**for Education Innovation**

Charter School
Development Corporation

Friends of Choice in
Urban Schools (FOCUS)

◆

**CHARTER SCHOOLS**

The Children's Studio
Public Charter School

The Marcus Garvey
Public Charter School

The Next Step
Public Charter School

The Options Public
Charter School

◆

**FRIENDS**

The District of Columbia
Committee on Public
Education (COPE)

Friendship House

The SEED Foundation

◆

**INDIVIDUALS**

Christopher Cert

Margaret Fisher

Stuart Land

Mary Levy

Patrick Grant

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Testimony of

Malcolm Peabody,
Chairman of
Friends of Choice in Urban Schools, Inc.

- and -

Lex Towle,
Managing Director of the
AppleTree Institute
for Education Innovation, Inc.

before the
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

September 4, 1997

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1725 K Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20006

# D.C. PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COALITION

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**INDIVIDUALS**
Christopher Cerf

Margaret Fisher

Stuart Land

Mary Levy

Patrick Grant

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Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today representing the D.C. Public Charter School Coalition. Our Coalition, which was formed early in 1997, represents the interests of D.C. charter school support groups, charter school founders, potential charter school founders, and existing D.C. charter schools, as well as many friends of charter schools in the fields of education, government, and business.

*The Coalition* has studied exhaustively the pros and cons of the charter school provisions of the D.C. Reform Act of 1995. Our evaluation concludes that eight (8) critical legislative changes are required now to allow charter schools to compete on an equal financial basis with District of Columbia Public Schools. They are as follows:

1. Funding for Charter School Facilities

**(A)** We propose an increase of $650 per pupil (approximately 10% of the per-pupil allocation for charter high schools) to be added to the current funding formula / or that amount to be explicitly earmarked in the Federal D.C. payment to be paid by the Federal Treasury.

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**Rationale**: The current per pupil allocation for charter schools in the District makes no provision for funding of facilities and other capital costs. The facilities and other capital costs of District schools are funded traditionally from bond sales and not from the operating budget from which the per pupil allocation for charter schools is derived.

Schools require a minimal 100 square feet per pupil. Our proposed increase of $650 per pupil would either service a lease payment of 100 square feet at $6.50 per foot or service a mortgage of $7,400 at 8% over 30 years which could be used to purchase and renovate a school. This recommended increase is very conservative and its payment by the Federal Treasury would provide a measure of certainty for investors.

## 2. Surplus School Properties Leasing Provisions

(A) We propose a long-term lease to charter schools for surplus school properties, similar to the situation in California and many other states, as follows:

1. Lease only, for life of school charter with future option to purchase.
2. Triple net leases @ $1 per year.
3. Conversion schools to have Right of First Refusal to the properties they currently occupy.
4. Start-up charters and relocating conversions would also have access to such leases.
5. Properties made available would include all "current public school property" referred to in "Preference in Leasing or Purchasing Public School Facilities" (per Sec. 5205 (b) ).
6. Leases are available to 501(c)(3) non-profits and governmental instrumentalities only.

**Rationale**: Such a leasing proposal would define a predictable process for conversions and start-up charters as mandated by Congress in the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995. In addition to improving the DCPS asset value, this process would allow all schools to remain in the school system, improving the DCPS balance sheet dramatically. This provision will also define "preference" in facilities for charter schools as mandated by Congress.

## 3. Pension Provisions for Charter Schools

**(A)** We propose that current D.C.P.S. teachers choosing to teach in a charter school continue to have the same rights and methods of participating in the D.C. Teachers' Pension system as they previously enjoyed.

**(B)** We also propose that any teacher (whether new to the District or otherwise) choosing to teach in a charter school should participate on an equal financial footing with all other D.C.P.S. teachers in the D.C. Teachers' Pension system.

**Rationale**: At the present time, charter schools receive no funding of any type for teacher pensions. This lack of funding makes it virtually impossible for a charter school to compete for the same caliber of teachers as a District school. It also inhibits the *conversion* of an existing public school to a charter school since there is no pension provision within the per pupil allocation. The need for this change is urgent since there are three existing public schools representing over 1,600 students who are applying for charter school status. These conversions could take effect as early as January 1998.

## 4. Increase the D.C. Line Item for Charter Schools

**(A)** We propose that the D.C. Line Item for charter schools be increased from $1.30 million to $5.25 million to reflect the minimum anticipated enrollment at charter schools for f/y 1998.

**Rationale**: For the upcoming 1997/1998 school year, we expect there to be four (previously chartered) charter schools with @ 250 total students. Average funding for these students, per the current per pupil allotment, is approximately five thousand ($5,000) per student which translates to required funding of **$1.25 million**. However, next year's line item for funding of all charter schools (four existing charters plus those expecting to be awarded charters in November ) is only $1.30 million.

Congressional legislation provides for up to 20 schools to be chartered annually. However, there are no funds provided for those charter schools expected to open after January 1, 1998. We are now working with three public schools with a total enrollment of 1,600 who hope to *convert* to charter schools during the 1997/1998 school year. To fund these 1,600 students at the average per pupil allotment of $5,000 for a partial school year would require **$4.0 million**. Therefore, total funding required in **f/y 1998 is $5.25 million**.

## 5. Creation of a Charter School Representative at the Department of Education

**(A)** We propose that Congress authorize the U.S. Department of Education to perform the duties and responsibilities (normally exercised by the State Education Agency) for Public Charter Schools in D.C.

**Rationale**: This change would permit the very significant federal start-up and planning grants for charter schools as well as all Title funding to be routed directly to charter schools. D.C. is the only jurisdiction in the U.S. where the SEA and the Local Education Agency (LEA) are one and the same. In every other jurisdiction the SEAs have the capacity to supervise and hold the LEAs accountable. The D.C. SEA, inextricably tied to the D.C. LEA, is unable to perform its role effectively. Moreover, charter schools are designed to be a form of competition for District schools. This presents a distinct conflict of interest for the SEA, which *should be* an efficient and independent conduit for federal funds.

This measure could be temporary until such time as the relationship between the District and the federal government has been restructured in such a way as to encourage creation of an independent SEA.

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## 6. Increased funding for D.C. Public Charter Residential Schools

**(A)** We propose that charter schools that serve students in residence be allowed to receive an increased annual payment.

Suggested language to amend Section 2401(b)(3)(B): [amendment is in bold type]

> "(B) Payment--Notwithstanding paragraph (2), the Mayor and the District of Columbia Council, in consultation with the Board of Education and the Superintendent, may adjust the amount of the annual payment under paragraph (1) to increase the amount of such payment if a District of Columbia public school or a public charter school serves a high number of students--
>
> "(i) with special need
>
> "(ii) who do not meet minimum literacy standards; or
>
> **"(iii) who are in residence."**

**Rationale**: A residential school can provide for students needing increased academic support, greater contact with strong role models, and a change in residential setting. Although these students may fall into the category of "special needs" stated in section (i) as defined by the District of Columbia primarily to provide support for students with learning disabilities, this population does not cover the complete set of individuals who require a change in residential setting. To best serve the educational, environmental, and social needs of such students, the District should be allowed to grant larger allocations than the current per pupil formula allows.

## 7. Creation of a Revolving Loan Fund

**(A)** We propose that charter schools receive loans from unexpended funds from prior year appropriation of per pupil allocations.

**Rationale:** Public charter schools need funds to pay expenses which will be incurred as early as July of each year. The first payment of public charter school operating expenses are not paid before October 15 due to the exigencies of the budget cycle. Hence, there is a significant funding gap.

The proposed loans from unexpended funds would be repaid by deducting the amounts from the first payment which occurs October 15th (the Coalition's legislative proposal was submitted earlier to the D.C. Appropriations Committee in the House).

## 8. Eliminate the Cap in the present law on Charter School Trustees

**(A)** We propose that the present cap on the number of charter school trustees be eliminated.

**Rationale:** The present law caps the number of charter school trustees at seven. An effective Board of Trustees may well need more trustees to provide the advice and help a new school needs to assist it in its many tasks.

**Conclusion:**

Many obstacles remain. Our proposals, when enacted, will enable more charter schools to open successfully in the District. We believe those innovative schools will provide better educational opportunities for children in the District of Columbia.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm Peabody Lex Towle
Coalition Representatives

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The Heritage Foundation

The Heritage Foundation 214 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002-4999 (202) 546-4400

**Congressional Testimony**

# Testimony before The Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring and the District of Columbia

## September 8, 1997

# “Progress Report on the Reforms in the District of Columbia Public Schools”

**Nina Shokraii**
**Education Policy Analyst**
**Domestic Policy Studies**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee:

It is an honor to appear before you today to discuss reforms in the District of Columbia public schools. The views I express in this testimony are my own, and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation. Much has happened since the D.C. Financial Control Board and General Julius Becton took over the governance of D.C. schools last November. The Board has acted efficiently with many of the dilemmas facing the city's schools but, as with any one-size-fits-all solution, General Becton's solutions are bound to displease some. This was particularly apparent when the Board swiftly voted on shutting down eleven D.C. public schools just a few months ago. Although a fiscally sound solution, it lacked one key component: the input of the community, specifically parental input.

Nearly two years ago, Congress enacted one of the strongest charter school laws in the country for DC. Yet, the city has only managed to open two – and both are caught in legal battles at the current time. While the rest of the Country is reaping the benefits of charter schools, the nation's capital – whose families could benefit the most – is lagging behind.

Last February, *The Washington Post* (February 20, 1997) conveyed the following disturbing facts about D.C.'s public schools:

- 85 percent of DC public school graduates who enter the University of the District of Columbia need remedial education before beginning course work toward their degrees;
- 56 percent of DC public school graduates who took the U.S. Armed Forces Qualification Test in 1994 scored below 50 percent, a failing grade;
- 72 percent of DC fourth-graders tested below "basic proficiency" on the National Assessment of Education Progress in 1994, a standardized test given to students in different grades every two years.

These facts – coupled with the current decrepit state of D.C.'s public school buildings which has caused a three-week delay in opening this fall – the prevalence of violence and drugs on the school grounds, and the vast but ineffective school bureaucracy has mobilized everyone from the President and Congress to local activists to find ways to fix the system quickly.

Mr. Chairman, there are many elements in an effective solution to the D.C. school system's shortcomings. One is an overhaul of the public schools, especially their suffocating bureaucracy, which the Control Board has taken on very ably. Another is to incorporate competition by offering charter schools within the public system, an alternative I hope will flourish under General Becton. But, the best solution is to offer

DC's parents vouchers to send their children to the schools of their choice, whether public, private, or parochial.

The District currently allows parents to choose between any public school of their choice. Although there are practical hurdles to exercising that option, we need to extend the option to include private and religious schools. This is crucial for three reasons: Private schools produce better results especially in the inner-city, a well crafted choice programs channels dollars in the most direct way to the classrooms, and choice ultimately benefits the public schools.

- **Private schools – especially parochial schools – produce better results especially in inner-city neighborhoods.** Inner-city private, parochial, and charter schools invariably offer a safe and stable learning environment. As seen in the Milwaukee (WI) and Cleveland (OH) schools, and in the numerous private scholarship programs offered throughout the United States, low-income inner-city children are benefiting from school choice.

Recent studies of the Milwaukee Choice experiment – which provides vouchers for children to attend a public or private non-religious school of their choice – were conducted by Paul Peterson of the John F. Kennedy School of Government and Department of Government at Harvard University, and Jay Greene, from the Center for Public Policy at the University of Houston. These were followed by a study by Cecilia Rouse from Princeton University. They offer concrete evidence that school choice programs benefit minority inner-city students the most. The Peterson/Greene study shows that, after just three years, the gap between the test scores of whites and minorities narrowed by 33 percent to 50 percent. The Rouse Study found that the Milwaukee Choice program significantly increased the mathematical achievement of students who had participated in the program.

The most important work demonstrating the strong effect of Catholic schooling, particularly on poor black children, is that of the late sociologist James Coleman, of the University of Chicago. Coleman's landmark study shows that Catholic school sophomores scored 10 percent higher in science, 12 percent higher in civics, and 17 to 21 percent higher in mathematics, reading, and vocabulary, than their public school counterparts. His study also showed that a child is more likely to attend school with a child of another race in a private school than in a public one. In addition, drop-out rates are significantly lower in private schools than in public schools.

Recent studies confirm Coleman's findings with an even higher degree of accuracy. William N. Evans and Robert M. Schwab from the University of Maryland School of Economics, for instance, found that attending a Catholic high school raised the probability of finishing high school and entering college for inner-city children by seventeen percentage points. "This is twice as large as the effect of moving from a one- to a two-parent family and two and one-half times as large as the effect of raising parents' education from a high school dropout to a college graduate, " they observed. Evans and Schwab also noted that Catholic schools have a particularly strong effect on students with the lowest probability to graduate – inner-city black pupils, students in urban areas, and students with low test scores.

**Derek Neal,** an associate professor in economics at the University of Chicago, found that African-American and Hispanic students attending urban Catholic schools were more than twice as likely to graduate from college as their counterparts in public schools. He found that 27 percent of black and Hispanic Catholic-school graduates who started college went on to graduate, compared with 11 percent in urban public schools. Neal's study also showed that the probability that inner-city students would graduate from high school increased from 62 percent to at least 88 percent when those students were placed in a Catholic secondary school. Furthermore, when compared with their public school counterparts, minority students in urban Catholic schools can expect to earn roughly 8 percent higher wages in the future.

Consistent with Neal's findings, the latest study in this area by University of Oregon economists **David Figlio and Joe Stone** found an even larger positive difference in test scores for black and Hispanic students who attended religious schools, an effect even more pronounced for blacks and Hispanics in urban areas, particularly in large central cities. (Neal's data is only from urban areas.)

Finally, **Caroline M. Hoxby**, an economist at Harvard who studied the effectiveness of school choice programs, found that competition from Catholic schools increased academic achievement at both public and Catholic schools. She found that greater private school competitiveness raises the academic quality of public schools, wages, and high school graduation rates of public school students. She also found that public schools react to this competition by increasing the teachers' salaries. Through choice, Hoxby concluded that both public and private, including religious, school kids would increase the amount of time spent in school by about two years while their math and reading test scores would improve by about 10 percent. She also noticed a wage increase of 14 percent.

- **More federal dollars would get into the classrooms.** Even though the Elementary and Secondary Education Act allocates the majority of its funds to programs that benefit the needy or disadvantaged, most of the money -- over $2 billion in tax dollars -- is spent on programs and administrative costs that do not directly involve local school districts. Through a well-designed school choice program, such as the one offered by you and your colleagues in the Student Opportunity Scholarship Act, federal money can be directly funneled to a state or local agency, which then can direct the dollars immediately to parents to enable them to select a school of choice for their children.

- **Vouchers would save public school dollars to use on public school students.** The per-pupil costs of sending a child to a private or parochial school are lower than the costs of sending them to a public school. According to a study on the costs of private school education conducted by the Cato Institute here in Washington, 67 percent of all private elementary and secondary schools charge $2,500 or less in tuition; the average tuition in private schools is only $3,116. This is half the national average cost of $6,857 to educate a student in public school. In D.C., the per-pupil cost is even higher, $8,841. The average cost of a Catholic school in DC is less than half that amount. (St. Peters on Capitol Hill charges $2,880; Holy Comforter on East Capitol charges $2,000; and St. Francis Xavier on Pennsylvania Avenue charges $1,800.) The public schools involved in a school choice or voucher program can in turn use the extra space and money to benefit their students, by managing their resources better or taking firmer action against unruly students.

Mr. Chairman, school choice is the only reform mechanism that would offer DC schools immediate and measurable results. Offering the parents of the District of Columbia choices beyond the traditional public education system, via charter schools and private schools, will ease the burden on the District's public schools while ultimately offering all children in DC a better education.

Thank you.

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# A COMPARISON OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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Two separate and very unequal systems of education exist in the District of Columbia. In one, children from all races and socioeconomic backgrounds are learning the basic skills and more, and are going on to college at high rates. The other system consigns the majority of its students to deteriorating and dangerous schools in which the education establishment has failed to teach most of them the skills they will need to succeed in school, let alone get into college. Despite numerous reforms and massive spending, the District of Columbia public schools (DCPS) have failed to improve their record, relegating thousands of students to a system that lags behind the generally more efficient private school system.

Congress soon will debate several measures designed to address this education crisis, including legislation that would offer educational opportunities to 60,000 eligible D.C. students. Under the District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997, for example, 2,000 low-income students would receive scholarships to attend the public or private school of their choice.[1] The need for such scholarships and other education reforms became starkly apparent last year when the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority[2] (known as the D.C. Financial Control Board) released a report on the state of the D.C. public schools. In this

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[1] The District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997, introduced by Representatives Richard Armey (R–TX), William Lipinski (D–IL), and Floyd Flake (D–NY) and Senators Dan Coats (R–IN), Joseph Lieberman (D–CT), and Sam Brownback (R–KS), would give vouchers to 2,000 of the District's poorest students to attend a school of their choice in the D.C. metropolitan area.

[2] The authority was created by Congress in 1995 to address the financial and management difficulties of the District of Columbia.

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### SOCIAL SCIENCE CONFIRMS POSITIVE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL CHOICE ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Caroline M. Hoxby, an economist at Harvard, studied the effectiveness of school choice programs using five different national surveys ("Do Private Schools Provide Competition for Public Schools?" National Bureau of Economic Research *Working Paper* No. 4978, 1994.). She found that competition from Catholic schools increased academic achievement at both public and private schools. Specifically, Hoxby examined the "effects of inter-school competition on public schools [based on] the availability and costs of private school alternatives to public schools." Her research showed that greater private school competitiveness raises the academic quality of public schools, wages, and high school graduation rates of public school students. In addition, her study found that public schools react to this competition by increasing their teachers' salaries. Through choice, Hoxby concluded, students in both public and private schools would increase the amount of time they spent in school by about two years while their math and reading test scores would improve by about 10 percent. She also estimated their subsequent wages would increase by 14 percent.

report, the Control Board warned that the "longer students stay in the District's public school system, the less likely they are to succeed."[3]

Reports from numerous sources underscore this gloomy assessment. On average, D.C. students perform far worse than all other students at the national level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress exam.[4] The $7,300-per-student school system has been so fraught with mismanagement and corruption that last November the Control Board took over its operation and dismantled the 11-member D.C. school board, taking away its power over budgets and policy and electing retired Army Lieutenant General Julius Becton, Jr., as superintendent.

As General Becton and the D.C. Emergency Transitional School Board struggle to find solutions to the District's problems, a look at D.C.'s approximately 90 nongovernment schools offers guidance for reform efforts. Comparisons (to the extent possible) between public and private schools in the District are instructive. For the following comparison, when local data are not available, national data are used. It is important to note that this study addresses only *categories* of schools in the District, not individual schools. Several public schools have outstanding achievement records, and not every private school outperforms the public schools.

**Demographics of D.C. Schools**

| | Center-City Catholic | Public |
|---|---|---|
| **White** | 0.50% | 4% |
| **Black** | 93% | 88% |
| **Hispanic** | 5% | 6.60% |
| **Asian** | 0.30% | 1.30% |

**Sources:** U.S. Department of Education, Archdiocese of Greater Washington

The following points clarify the condition of private and public school education in the District of Columbia. In each case, the most recent available data are used.[5]

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[3] *Children in Crisis: Foundation for the Future*, District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority, November 1996, available on the Internet at *http://www.nubian.com/dcfra/newinfo/edreform3.html*.

[4] See U.S. Department of Education, *NAEP 1996 Science Report Card for the Nations and the States*, May 1997, pp. 25, 56, and *NAEP 1996 Mathematics Report Card for the Nations and the States*, February 1997, pp. 28, 30.

[5] In certain cases, earlier data were used in order to develop consistency in comparisons.

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## PRIVATE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

According to information furnished by the most recent census, the D.C. public schools, and the Archdiocese of Greater Metropolitan Washington:

- In 1995, more students attended private schools than at any time since 1986. Over 15,000 students—**17 percent** of school-age children in the District—attended private schools that year.[6]
- During the 1994–1995 school year, about the same number of black students attended private schools as white students citywide.[7]
- According to the most recent census, private school attendance is highest in the District's third ward, in which students score the highest on DCPS standardized tests. (See Chart 1.)
- In Ward 8, in which the poverty rate tops 25 percent, at least **10 percent** of the student population attends private schools. (See Charts 1 and 2 and Table 1.)

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS[8]

In the most recent round of DCPS testing, during the 1996–1997 school year (see Chart 3),

- **33 percent** of third graders scored below the basic level in reading and math;
- **29 percent** of eighth graders scored below basic in reading; and
- **72 percent** of eighth graders scored below basic in math.

(On these tests, students can score "below basic," "basic," "proficient," or "advanced." A score of "proficient" signifies that the student is performing at grade level.)

On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the District of Columbia consistently scores last behind all participating states. Furthermore:

- **80 percent** of DCPS students in fourth grade ranked below the basic math achievement levels in 1996 (see Chart 4);
- **78 percent** of DCPS fourth graders ranked below the basic reading achievement levels—nearly twice as low as the national average—in 1994 (see Chart 5); and
- Only **53 percent** of the students entering D.C. high schools in ninth grade remained in the system to graduate four years later. Overall, **40 percent** of the city's high school students dropped out or left the District's schools to attend other schools.

Evidence of the cumulative effect of ineffective schools is found in the amount of remedial education required to bring D.C. public school graduates up to speed when they enter college. In the late 1970s, officials from the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) reported that it took one year of remedial work to do this. Now, according to the D.C. city government and the UDC, the average time required is about two years.[9]

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[6] Based on DCPS Dropout and Migrations Statistics (1991–1995).

[7] *Indices: A Statistical Index to District of Columbia Services*, 1994–1996, Office of Planning and Evaluation, Government of the District of Columbia, p. 246.

[8] To protect the privacy of their students, the majority of D.C. private schools were unwilling to release test scores thus, the authors are unable to provide test score comparisons.

[9] Valerie Strauss and Sari Horwitz, "Students Caught in a Cycle of Failure," *The Washington Post*, February 20, 1997, p. A1.

## HOW SCHOOL CHOICE BENEFITS MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following are excerpts from the affidavit of John Gardner, at-large member of the Milwaukee Public Schools Board of Directors and a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and American Civil Liberties Union, on the positive effects of the Milwaukee school choice program on the city's public schools. (Mr. Gardner submitted this affidavit on September 12, 1996, in defense of the Milwaukee School Choice Program in *Warner Jackson, et al. vs. John T. Benson, et al. and Parents for School Choice, et al.*, No. 95–CV–1982, and *Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association, et al. vs. John T. Benson, et al. and Parents for School Choice, et al.*, No. 95–CV–1997.)

> My involvement with Milwaukee Public Schools—as a member of the school board, as a parent, and as an active and concerned citizen—has persuaded me that MPS's internal reforms require the sustained challenge and competition of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. The program also puts effective pressure on MPS to expand, accelerate, and improve reforms long deliberated and too-long postponed. The following examples demonstrate MPS's responsiveness to the needs and requests of our low-income minority families during 1995–96:
>
> - MPS has, at long last, approved its first charter school.
> - MPS authorized three small, innovative high schools initiated by MPS teachers.
> - We approved our third Montessori school, after more than a decade of long waiting lists [of students that want] to enter our two highly successful MPS Montessori schools.
> - Low-income MPS parents have long complained about the unpredictable continuity for their children, and are especially disadvantaged by racial and geographic restrictions from entering MPS's most popular schools in the lottery random selection process. We increased educational continuity at five schools.
> - In an historic action, the MPS board voted to close six schools we identified as failing and to reconstitute these schools' administrations and faculties.
> - We have expanded our use of partnership schools.
> - We authorized two elementary schools to contract for expanded classroom space.
> - We have contracted with two religiously affiliated, non-sectarian schools for exceptional education students.
>
> I believe that the challenge and competition provided by the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program for exemplary educational standards, and options for state-aid dollars, made the critical difference in instituting these long-overdue reforms during the 1995–96 school year.

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## NATIONAL COMPARISONS TO CATHOLIC INNER-CITY SCHOOLS

Many studies have found that the poorest students in the country's inner cities perform better in Catholic schools.[10] For example, **23 percent** of eighth graders from the poorest families who attend public schools across the country perform below basic levels in reading, compared with **11.2 percent** of poor students in Catholic schools. (See Chart 6.)

## STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Various surveys of students and teachers present drastic differences in the environments of public and private schools. For example:

- **16 percent** of students in the District's public schools have reported carrying a weapon into school; **11 percent** avoid school because they fear for their safety. By contrast, during the 1996–1997 school year, D.C. Catholic schools reported only one instance of a weapon at school and only one drug incident. No serious violence was reported.[11] (See Chart 7.)
- Despite a high level of violence during the 1992–1993 school year, the DCPS reported expelling students at a rate of only 24 per 1,000 pupils, far below the urban school average of 114. In D.C. Catholic schools, only 2 children were expelled.
- **19 percent** of D.C. public school teachers report verbal abuse as a serious problem, as opposed to **17 percent** of public school teachers in central cities nationwide and a mere **1.8 percent** of private school teachers in central cities nationwide. (See Chart 8.)

## BUDGETS AND BUREAUCRACY

According to data on public and private school budgets and administrative costs from the Archdiocese of Greater Metropolitan Washington and the D.C. public schools:

- The District has only 16 teachers per administrator, compared with the national average of 42. Catholic schools in the District fund 255 teachers for every administrator. (See Chart 9.)
- Only a little more than **50 percent** of the District's education expenditures goes toward instruction, while the rest of the country spends **62 percent.** (See Chart 10.) Catholic schools in the District allocate more than **63 percent** of their expenditures to instruction.
- The DCPS average per-pupil expenditure was about $7,300 in fiscal year 1996, higher than the national average for almost all big cities. D.C. "center city" Catholic schools educate their students at a cost of about $2,700 per pupil.[12] (See Chart 11.) Overall, educating a student at 88 private schools in the District (including both sectarian and nonsectarian schools) costs less than $4,000 a year; at 65, it costs less than $3,200.
- Despite high funding levels per student, a D.C. Financial Control Board survey found that **12 percent** of D.C. public school classrooms did not have textbooks at the beginning of the 1996–1997 school year, and **20 percent** did not have adequate supplies.[13]

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[10] See Nina H. Shokraii, "Why Catholic Schools Spell Success for America's Inner-City Children," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1128, June 30, 1997.

[11] Interview with Vincent Clark, Catholic Archdiocese of Greater Metropolitan Washington. The Archdiocese received these numbers from its 16 "center city" Catholic schools for the 1996–1997 school year.

[12] This number reflects the actual cost to the school system for the 1995–1996 school year, not the tuition rate charged per pupil.

[13] Strauss and Horwitz, "Students Caught in a Cycle of Failure," *op. cit.*

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- After school officials announced over two years ago that they had abolished nearly 180 bureaucratic positions, school records later revealed that they actually had cut only 100 slots—all of them teaching positions.[14]
- In 1996, the federal government revoked $20 million in grants awarded to the system because of gross mismanagement. For example, the District spent $1.6 million on unrelated personnel salaries instead of extra instruction for disadvantaged students, as required by law.
- The DCPS spend $21 million annually to send 1,079 special education students to private schools. This comes to $19,500 per student, a rate that is five times the national average.

## QUALITY OF FACILITIES

Waste and inefficiency are widely cited as partly responsible for the city's deteriorating schools. For example:

- According to the Superintendent's Task Force on Education Infrastructure, a comprehensive facilities assessment of 189 school system buildings in 1991 found more than 16,000 physical deficiencies that would cost an estimated $584 million to repair.
- In 1996, the U.S. General Accounting Office reported that **91 percent** of D.C. public schools had at least one inadequate building feature and **73 percent** of the District's schools had at least one unsatisfactory environmental condition, including improper lighting, heating, and ventilation. (See Chart 12.) The average age of DCPS buildings is 50 years.[15]
- The GAO also found that **25 percent** of the maintenance budget never left the facilities office.
- In the early 1990s, the D.C. Council allocated $63 million for roof repairs. According to Control Board analysts, only **7 percent** of that money was spent on roof repairs. Much of the remainder was diverted to pay for salaries.[16]

## CONCLUSION

The D.C. public school system needs sweeping reform. It is still far from clear, however, that needed reforms will be implemented soon. That is why allowing students from the bottom rung of the ladder to attend private schools, as contemplated by the D.C. Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997 now being considered by Congress, is so necessary. The District's public schools have failed to prepare students for success; the District's private schools offer a less expensive, more effective alternative. Until General Becton is able to bring public schools up to par, children living in the nation's capital should have the choice to attend a school that will provide them with the quality education they deserve, whether that school is public or private.

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[14] Sari Horwitz and Valerie Strauss, "A Well-Financed Failure," *The Washington Post*, February 16, 1997, p. A1.

[15] U.S. General Accounting Office, *School Facilities: Condition of America's Schools*, GAO/HEHS 95-61, February 1995, p. 37.

[16] Michael Powell and Vernon Loeb, "In Lieu of Planning, Patchwork: Students Prepare for the Future in Buildings Bearing Scars of the Past," *The Washington Post*, February 18, 1997, p. A1.

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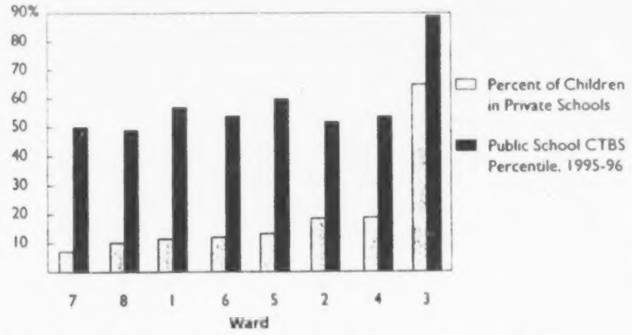
Chart 1

## DCPS Schools Producing Highest Outcomes in Wards in Which Most Students Attend Private Schools



Note: CTBS is the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. The District has since switched to the Stanford Achievement Test. The latest scores are not yet available by ward.
Source: 1990 U.S. Census; D.C. Office of Planning; DCPSP

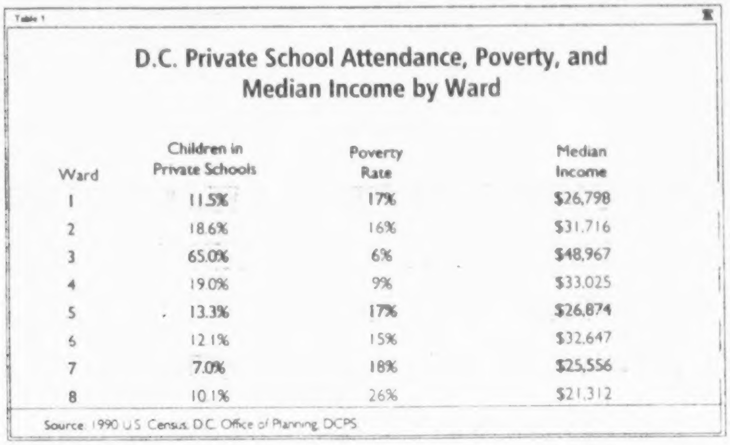


Table 1

## D.C. Private School Attendance, Poverty, and Median Income by Ward

| Ward | Children in Private Schools | Poverty Rate | Median Income |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 11.5% | 17% | $26,798 |
| 2 | 18.6% | 16% | $31,716 |
| 3 | 65.0% | 6% | $48,967 |
| 4 | 19.0% | 9% | $33,025 |
| 5 | 13.3% | 17% | $26,874 |
| 6 | 12.1% | 15% | $32,647 |
| 7 | 7.0% | 18% | $25,556 |
| 8 | 10.1% | 26% | $21,312 |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census; D.C. Office of Planning; DCPS

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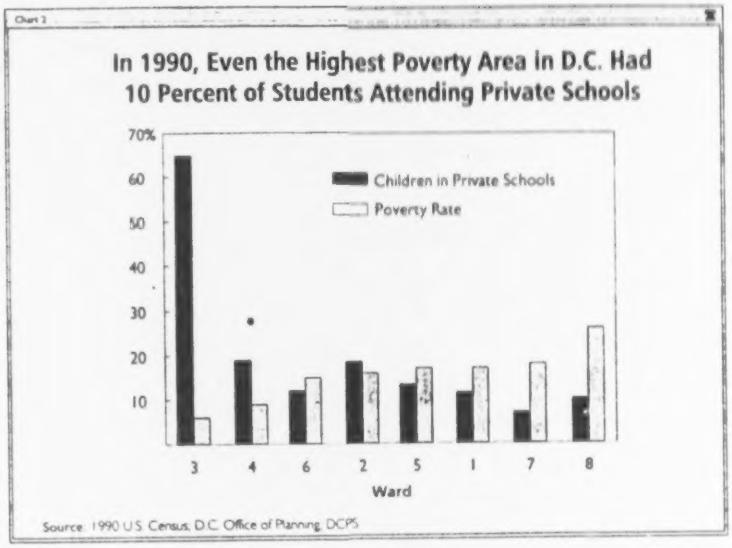
Chart 2

In 1990, Even the Highest Poverty Area in D.C. Had 10 Percent of Students Attending Private Schools

Source: 1990 U.S. Census, D.C. Office of Planning, DCPS

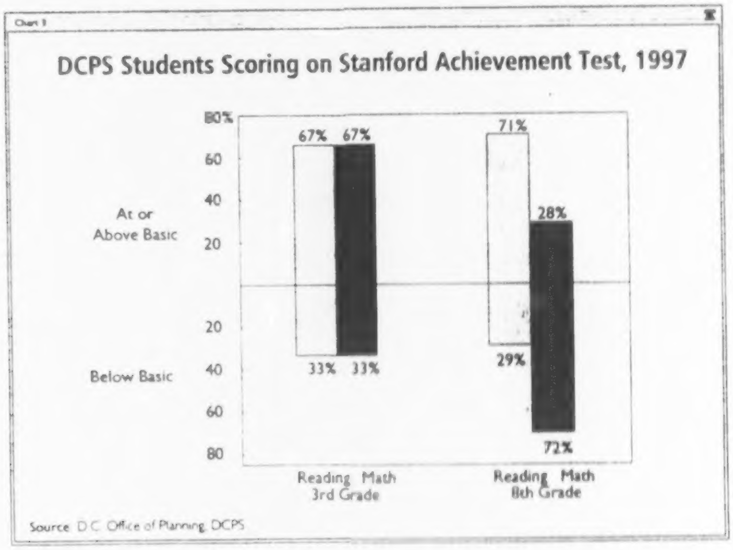
Chart 3

DCPS Students Scoring on Stanford Achievement Test, 1997

Source: D.C. Office of Planning, DCPS

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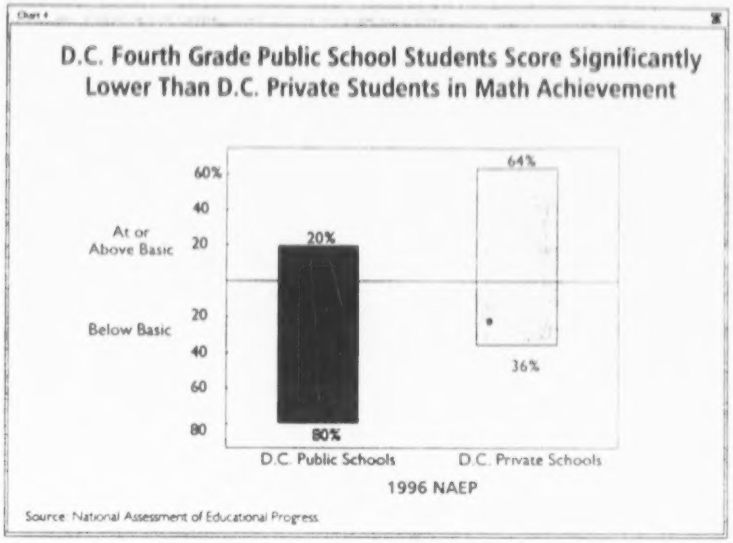
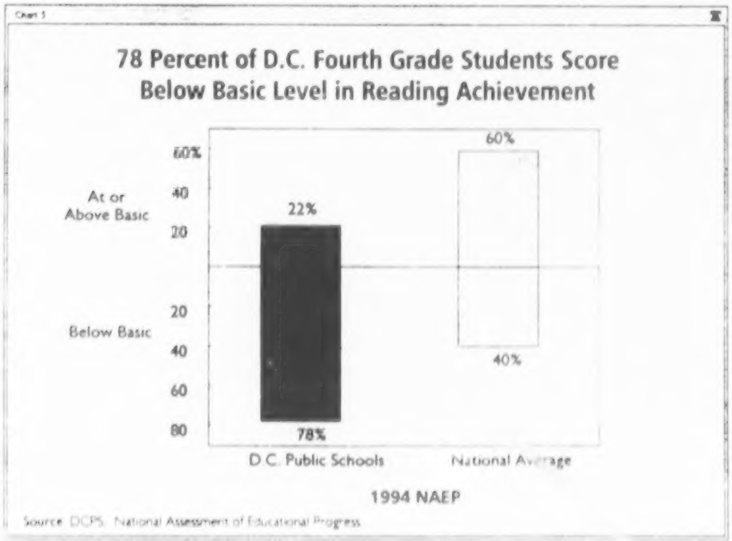


D.C. Fourth Grade Public School Students Score Significantly Lower Than D.C. Private Students in Math Achievement

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress

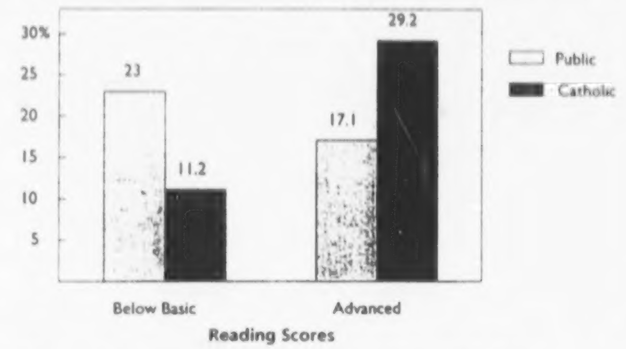


78 Percent of D.C. Fourth Grade Students Score Below Basic Level in Reading Achievement

Source: DCPS; National Assessment of Educational Progress

Chart 6

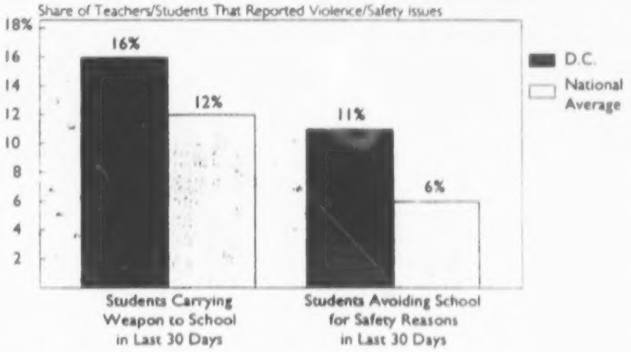
## National Comparison: Eighth Graders from the Lowest Socioeconomic Quartile Perform Better in Catholic Schools



Source: U.S. Department of Education, NELS: 88 Student Survey; Penny A. Sebring and Eric M. Camburn, *A Profile of Eighth Graders in Catholic School*, NCEA, 1992.

Chart 7

## Teachers and Students Report That D.C. Public Schools Are More Dangerous Than the National Average



Sources: Data Volume for the National Education Goals Report (Volume Two: State Data) 1995. The District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority Web site. *http://www.nubion.com/dcfra/newinfo/edreform3.html*

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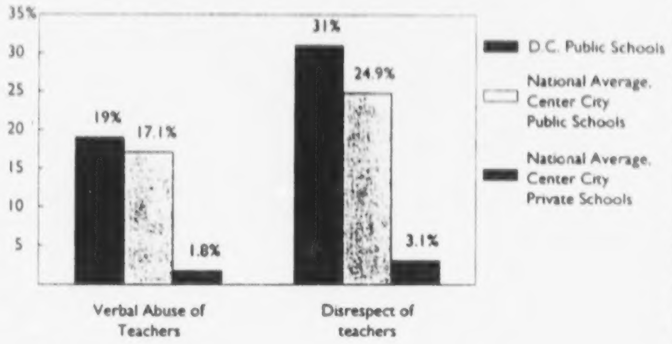
**Chart 8**

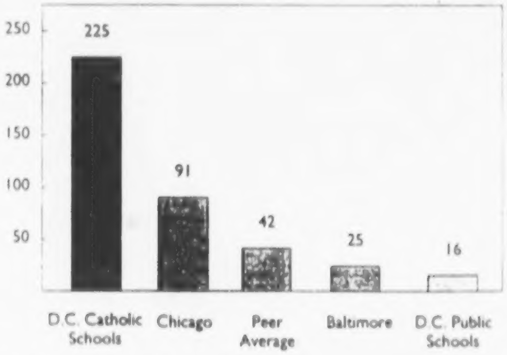
## Abuse and Disrespect of Teachers: D.C. Public Schools Compared with National Averages,1993-1994



Note: Figures based on teacher reports.
Source: NCES. *Schools and Staffing the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1993-1994*

**Chart 9**

## Number of Teachers Per Central Administrator, 1992-1993



Note: Peer Average is the average of cities with similar demographics.
Sources: National Urban Education Goals: 1992-1993 Indicators Report (Council of Great City Schools); Archdiocese of Greater Washington.

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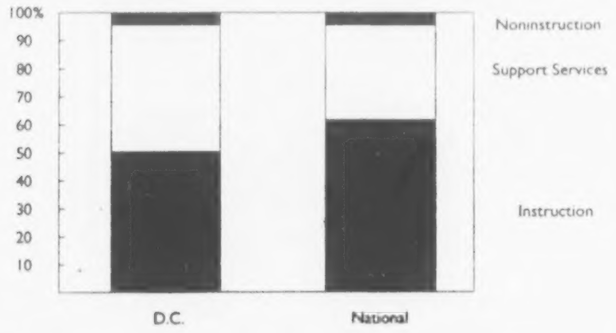
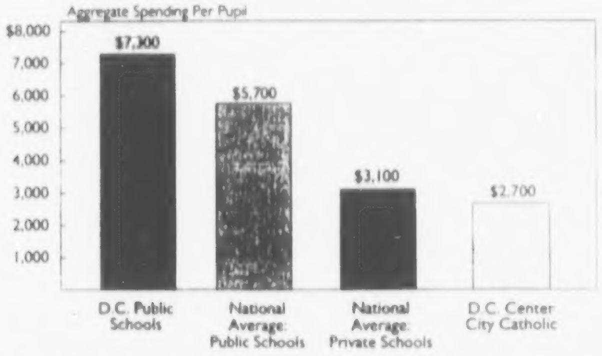
Chart 10



**Only Half of the District's Education Expenditures Go Toward Instruction—The National Average Is 63 Percent**

Source: *NCES Statistics in Brief: Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 1994-1995*, U.S. Department of Education, June 1997

Chart 11



**In FY 1996, DCPS Spent Almost Three Times as Much Per Student as Center City Catholic Schools**

Note: Figures are for total spending per pupil, not tuition.

Sources: DCPS, *FY 1998 Recommended Budget Request*, January 15, 1997; Archdiocese of Greater Washington; *Public and Private Schools — How Do They Differ?* U.S. Department of Education

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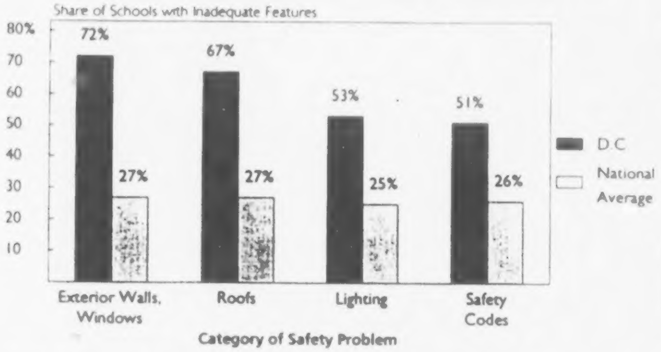
Chart 12

## D.C. Public Schools Have Two to Three Times as Many Safety Problems Than the National Average



Sources: U.S. General Accounting Office, *School Facilities: Profiles of School Conditions by State*.
The District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority Web site.
*http://www.nubian.com/dcfra/newinfo/edreform3.html*

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**Kent B. Amos**
**Charter School Testimony**
**Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring in the District of Columbia**

**September 8, 1997**

Good Morning, Chairman Brownback, Senators, ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased to be able to address you on this very important subject this morning.

My name is Kent Amos. I am the founder and President of the Urban Family Institute, a non-profit family and child advocacy and service organization in the District of Columbia. UFI was established in 1991 to create urban neighborhoods in which every family has the resources necessary to realize their full potential and to ensure that no child grows up without the close guidance, nurturing, discipline and support of caring adults. The Institute works in churches, schools, and public housing developments to build infrastructure which will support families. We are very excited about the opportunity for educational reform and neighborhood redevelopment which has been made possible by local charter school legislation. The Institute is working with the D.C. Council to ensure that necessary changes are made to the current legislation which will help support the successful start of neighborhood charter schools.

The Urban Family Institute (UFI) is pleased to submit our recommendations for legislative changes supporting world-class education for all children in the District of Columbia. We propose four critical legislative changes that will allow charter schools to stand on equal financial footing with their counterparts in the District of Columbia Public Schools.

1. Funding for Charter School Facilities

The current per-pupil allocation for charter schools in the District makes no provision for funding of facilities and other capital costs. The facilities and other capital costs of traditional public schools are funded from bond sales and not from the operating budget from which the per-pupil allocation for charter schools is derived.

We propose an increase of approximately 10% of the per-pupil allocation for charter high schools -- this amount being the highest average per-pupil costs of all grade levels -- to be added to the current funding formula or that amount to be earmarked in the federal D.C. payment. Nationally, capital costs comprise an average of 10-15% of public school expenditures.

## 2. Equity in Teacher's Pensions

Presently, charter schools receive no funding for teacher pensions. This lack of funding makes it difficult for a charter school to attract the same high quality teachers as any District school. It also impedes the conversion of existing public schools to charters since there is no pension provision within the per-pupil allocation.

We propose that teachers in the D.C. public charter schools should be given the same rights and methods of participating in the D.C. Teachers' Pension system as their colleagues in our traditional public schools. Charter schools are themselves public schools, and as such, there should be no fundamental distinctions between funding allocated to their students or teachers. It is crucial that we request an allotment in our per-pupil funding that allows teachers in the charter schools to participate on equal financial footing as all teachers in the District.

## 3. First-Year Receipt of Federal funds

Funds for school lunch, Title I, and special education are imperative for the children who will be entering many newly formed charter schools. It is critical that charter schools receive this money in year one so that children can be fed and receive specialized educational support. As it stands, charter schools are compromised by a timing problem. Eligibility for federal educational assistance has traditionally been determined using data from the prior year's enrollment. This would exclude start-up charter schools. We urge changes to the legislation which would ensure that charter schools receive federal funding in their start-up year. One possible solution would be to make this data available to the new charter schools from the traditional public schools which the students had attended the previous year or from the central offices.

Alternatively, since the district's fiscal year begins in October, students could, as a practical matter, be counted **before** the end of the first fiscal year (i.e. in September), and then qualify for funds in the next fiscal year (i.e. October), which would actually be the same school year. Again, we view this as a matter of equity between public schools. Charter schools should be treated no differently from traditional public schools which routinely use preliminary estimates of student enrollment to qualify for federal funding.

## 4. Re-establishment of funding for Adult Education

If at any time in the future, the DCPS should reinstitute the funding of adult education programs, we propose that these programs receive equal funding in the charter schools.

## Conclusion

It is imperative that charter schools are given an equal opportunity to succeed in educating DC's children.

# STATEMENT OF BRUCE K. MACLAURY
# CHAIRMAN, EMERGENCY TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES
# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Before The**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,**
**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**
**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**SEPTEMBER 8, 1997**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present the views of the Emergency Board of Trustees on the progress of school reform in the District of Columbia.

The Trustees have been given until June 30, 2000 to accomplish wide-ranging, long-lasting reform in the District's school system. As you know, the charge we received from the Control Board last November was detailed and far-reaching; we are asked to make rapid improvement in virtually every aspect of this system's functions. For our CEO, General Becton, and for the other Trustees, that has meant making some hard choices among competing priorities.

Inescapably, we have had to put safe and secure schools at the top of the list. If our motto "Children First" means anything, it means ensuring that students go to school in buildings free of violence, and also free from leaky roofs that could cause fire code violations and unexpected shutdowns. This Administration took over from earlier ones that had allowed schools to deteriorate while not even spending their admittedly-inadequate capital funds. We were given enough funds, $49.6 million, to make a

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responsible start toward stabilizing our aging schools, and we gave full support to General Becton when he decided that the job had to be done right, by replacing leaky roofs instead of patching them in an endless waste of taxpayer dollars.

**The Dimensions of the Emergency**. If you have not recently reviewed the Control Board order of November, 1996, and the accompanying statistical materials, I commend them to you. They illustrate vividly why we are called the "Emergency" board. When we took on these responsibilities, the public school system was in meltdown. Data on students and staff were difficult to obtain and hard to verify; procurement practices and financial controls were lax; standards for hiring and evaluation were unenforced. The organization was brilliant at creating bureaucratic logjams, but had forgotten how to educate children.

I begin on this point for two reasons: First, to give General Becton credit he has rarely received, for taking a series of actions to rationalize the organization and put it on a sound footing. He has worked hard over the past 10 months to put in place the people and systems needed to do the job -- but much of this effort has not been visible to the average citizen, or even to members of Congress.

The second reason I cite this effort is because this groundwork has brought us to the point where real accountability is becoming possible. Beginning with this new school year, you and the public will know what to expect, how fast it should happen, and who is responsible. Our fundamental principle is that the performance of every individual in this system should be measured by how well their work contributes to increased student learning, and that process starts with the Trustees and Gen. Becton.

**The Academic One Year Plan**. Over the past several months, in a series of forums, we have obtained broad public input on how to shape our academic plan for the coming year and beyond. In an upcoming public meeting, we expect to ratify this ambitious program, including:

o Tough new academic standards and assessments;

- Performance targets for every school in the system, plus rewards for those that meet targets, probation for schools in trouble, and reconstitution for those that chronically fail our children;
- An evaluation system that bases teacher and principal evaluations on the progress of students in their care;
- And a new promotion policy ensuring that students in the third and eighth grades have at least basic reading skills before moving to a higher grade.

**Assessing Our Progress**. The key to systemwide accountability is solid, quantifiable evidence of student learning. That's why the Trustees have endorsed not only stronger academic standards for DC, but also a system of assessment that provides consistent, reliable data to parents, teachers, and administrators. This data will form the core of what we report to all those who play a role in setting school-system policy, including the Control Board and the members of this Committee.

In releasing preliminary results of last May's Stanford-9 assessments a few weeks ago, we saw the power of good data to mobilize public opinion. District residents were dismayed to know that one-third of our third graders are "below basic" in both reading and math, that 29 percent of eighth-graders are "below basic" in reading, and that an astonishing 72 percent of eighth-graders are "below basic" in math. Citywide, grade-by-grade results will shortly be released, and will give us a detailed map of where we must concentrate improvement efforts. And nationally-normed, school-by-school results will be released a few weeks later.

We are committed to doing these in-depth assessments beginning in first grade. Improving the basic reading and math skills of our young people is at the heart of our mandate. Just as we are setting standards for what students must know and be able to do at each grade level, we must test to make sure they are reaching those standards. We cannot wait until third or fourth grade to find out whether a child can't read.

**Research and Redesign**. Part of our charge from the Control Board is to direct resources to the level of individual schools. The budget being presented today takes a major step in that direction, and our academic plan envisions going further -- aiming to put decisions about 85% of school system resources in the hands of local school administrators within the next several years.

But our mandate is not simply to pour more dollars into business-as-usual schools. Over the past decade, educators have learned a great deal about what works and what doesn't. The work of the New American Schools Development Corporation, the Edison Project, the Core Knowledge Foundation, and researchers such as Robert Slavin of Johns Hopkins University have provided eye-opening new approaches to educating America's children. *Washington is our nation's capital, and we believe that children here should have the best the nation can offer from this array of new design ideas.*

Already, twenty-three of our lowest-performing elementary schools have begun the redesign process. Five are working with the Laboratory for Student Success at Temple University; another nine with Bob Slavin's Success for All program, which has generated impressive reading gains in hundreds of schools nationwide; and nine more are working with a team from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, reaping the results of NICHD's massive, 17-year research project on the components of effective early reading strategy.

**Charters and Choice**. In the coming year, we will encourage more schools to affiliate with these and other effective, research-based programs. But there is another way in which we can encourage innovation in the District, and that is through charter schools.

The DC School Reform Act of 1995 contains one of the nation's strongest charter laws, allowing the creation of up to 20 charter schools in any one year. Although the Emergency Trustees bear no direct responsibility for chartering, we have an oversight role as the District's State Board of Education, and our support for the charter process is strong. We are also responsible for approving policies responding to Congressional directives to provide a preference to charter operators in the disposition of excess DC Public School property. This has not been an easy matter, because Congress has asked on the one hand that we maximize revenue from these properties, and on the other, that we help make them available for charter schools. But I am confident that we will arrive at a solution that serves both objectives equitably.

Finally, let me say that there are some, within and outside the school system, who regard charter schools as a threat -- or, at best, a distraction. I say they are an essential component of reform, providing not only fertile ground for trying out ideas and innovations that are difficult to introduce in a large public school system, but providing a healthy dose of competition as well. In their recent report on "Charter Schools in Action," researchers from the Hudson Institute found that charters constitute a "consumer-driven system [that] creates diversity and choices." As we try to move from a dysfunctional, monolithic school system to a lean, responsive *system of schools*, I believe charter schools can be an indispensable asset.

I look forward to your questions.

# STATEMENT OF JULIUS W. BECTON, JR.
# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER-SUPERINTENDENT
# OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, UNITED STATES SENATE

SEPTEMBER 8, 1997

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss our efforts to improve the District of Columbia Public Schools.

As you know, on November 15, 1996, I became Chief Executive Officer through an order of the Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (Control Board). This order also established the 9-member Emergency Transitional Education Board Of Trustees, of which I am a member. The Control Board took this action after concluding that "...in virtually every category and for every grade level, by virtually every measure of performance, the public school system has failed to provide a quality education for all children and a safe environment in which to learn..." Indeed, the school system was broken in fundamental ways: it lacked academic standards, employed uncertified teachers, could not pay its bills on time, and had crumbling facilities plagued by fire code violations. No one was held accountable.

Today we operate in a new context of opportunity, but face the challenges of past failures that mounted over many years. This new school year will be a very different one for the children and parents of the District. We expect to be held accountable for achieving our goals for them.

I believe that our success or failure will be judged on whether or not we achieve fundamental improvement in three core areas: (1) academics, (2) school facilities, and (3) personnel and financial management systems. What I mean by fundamental improvement is that these core areas will be on a firm foundation for continuous progress in future years. My guiding principle in this effort is Children First. All of our efforts must be weighed in terms of their impact on children.

## BUDGET REQUEST

The FY 1998 budget request for the DC Public Schools includes a total of $567.1 million. This consists of $462 million in local funds and $105.1 million in grants and other funds. The local budget is about $10 million less than last year. The budget includes 8,623 locally-funded FTEs and 1,386 non-local FTEs. We are focusing resources at the school level. Nearly 90 percent of the FTEs will be directly assigned to schools. Our budget figures for FY 1998 translate into a total per pupil expenditure of 7,271 and a locally funded per-pupil expenditure of 5,923. (See table 1).

Table 1: Comparison of Budget Figures for FY 1997 and FY 1998

| | FY 1997 | FY 1998 Request | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Budget (in millions) | $568.6 | $567.1 | $( 1.5) |
| Local Budget | $472.3 | $462.0 | $(10.3) |
| Non-Local Budget | $96.3 | $105.1 | $ 8.8 |
| Total FTEs | 10,216 | 10,009 | (207) |
| Local FTEs | 9,063 | 8,623 | (440) |
| Non-Local FTEs | 1,153 | 1,386 | 233 |
| Total School-Based FTEs | 8,604 | 8,989 | 385 |
| Total Non-School-Based FTEs | 1,612 | 1,020 | (592) |
| Total Per-pupil Expenditure | 7,230 | 7,271 | 41 |
| Local Per-pupil Expenditure | 6,005 | 5,923 | (82) |

## Priorities for the Core Area of Academics

Our priorities in FY 1998 for the core area of academics are focused on accomplishing the four goals described in our draft year-one implementation plan (see attachment).

- First, improve student achievement by adopting world-class standards and providing high quality training. Beginning this year DCPS will have content and performance standards that define what we expect every child to learn and be able to do.

- Second, ensure quality school staff by ensuring all teachers are qualified to teach in their subject areas and developing a corps of school leaders with skills to manage instructional and fiscal autonomy. This school year all new DCPS teachers will enter our classrooms with the appropriate credentials to teach in the area they have been assigned. If teachers already employed by the system are not similarly credentialed, they will be removed from the workforce in January 1998.

- Third, increase accountability throughout the school system with performance measures and clear incentives and consequences for central office functions, school buildings, staff and students. Starting this year, principal evaluations will be tied to growth in test scores. Schools with too many students performing below basic will be placed on probation. We are also ending social promotions. This year, if our children cannot read at a basic level in grade 3, they will not move to the next grade. In addition, we will ensure an accurate enrollment count that is audited.

- Fourth, promote school restructuring, decentralization, and parental choice. This means moving more resources to the school level and giving parents greater opportunities to choose the schools their children will attend. This also means facilitating the development of charter schools that will serve as laboratories of change for the entire school system. I believe that charter schools with high quality educational programs and sound business management hold great potential to improve the choices and quality of public education available in the District.

## Priorities for School Facilities

Our priorities for the second core area, school facilities, are guided by our Long Range Facilities Master Plan. The plan has three implementation phases. The first phase is contained in the FY 1997 Emergency Capital Improvement Program. These critical, envelope type repairs now underway are essential for schools to remain open during school year 1997-98. We have abated more than 1,600 fire code violations and have underway the largest roof replacement effort ever done for the DC Public Schools. Quick fixes and patches will no longer be tolerated.

The second phase of the plan is encompassed in the Capital Improvement Program for fiscal years 1998 and 1999. During this period, needed repairs, replacements and improvements will be accomplished, and planning will begin for the modernization of existing schools and some new school construction.

The third phase, slated for fiscal years 2000-2007, is when we intend to undertake the full modernization and revitalization of our school facilities. Current estimates for complete repair and modernization are in the $1.5 to $2 billion range.

## Priorities for Personnel and Financial Management Systems

Regarding personnel and financial management systems, our third core area, we have made major improvements. We have verified how many staff we have and are realigning them for the FY 1998 budget. We must continue our work to build new systems with strong internal controls to track personnel and our spending.

For the first time, the DCPS budget will be constructed around programs. That is, budget amounts for each program will be specified, allowing us to hold managers accountable for spending. While this may sound like common sense, it represents a major accomplishment given that funds were previously commingled across programs, allowing no accountability.

## CONCLUSION

In concluding my statement, I wish to take note of the frustration that has been expressed in some quarters. I must admit that at times I too am frustrated. However, the problems were piled deep when we arrived and many remain. My job is to look at the three years we have and ensure that we effectively execute the essential steps to place the school system on a firm foundation for continuous improvement. I must make the hard decisions necessary for lasting reform. You may wish to quarrel with our pace, but I do not believe that you can quarrel with our direction or our resolve. Failure to meet the needs of the children in this city is not an option.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I will be glad to answer any questions that you and other members of the Subcommittee may have.

District of Columbia Public Schools
Draft Year One Implementation Plan
School Year 1997-1998

| ID | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | COST | | PERFORMANCE MEASURE | | | PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | 1997 | | | | | | | 1998 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Js | F | M | A | M | Jn |
| | **GOAL I: IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT** | | | | | *Gains on Stanford 9 reference exam results, attendance rates and graduation rates* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ***High Standards:*** | **Adopt and implement content and performance standards and aligned assessments** | **Arlene Ackerman** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Align DCPS content standards with New Standards performance standards | Judy Aaronson | | $50,000 | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2 | | Train teachers and administrators in the use of the newly aligned content standards in English, mathematics and science for all students | Kenneth Whitted, Helena Jones, Ralph Neal and principals | | $250,000 | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 1.3 | | Provide mandatory training in the use of grade level and course expectations in English, mathematics and science for teachers | Judy Aaronson, Chris Stewart | | $40,000 | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | |
| 1.4 | | Develop "approved" list of standards based and research grounded curriculum programs from which schools may choose | Judy Aaronson, Chris Stewart | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 1.5 | | Place all curriculum guides on the Internet DCPS web page for access by all schools | Maurice Sykes, Joe Renard | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 1.6 | | Administer New Standards reference exams | Judy Aaronson, Carol Johnson | | $500,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | |
| 1.7 | | Administer nationally normed Stanford 9 exams | Judy Aaronson, Carol Johnson | | $1,200,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | |
| 1.8 | | Develop a public engagement campaign to prepare staff, parents, and community for initial test results and use of standards | Loretta Hardge, Arlene Ackerman, Gloria Ford | | $150,000 | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | ***Training:*** | **Provide high quality, standards-based professional development** | **Arlene Ackerman** | | | *Training completed rated as useful by participants* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | | Provide district-wide training on content and performance standards, core curriculum and assessments | Judy Aaronson, James Amick | | $250,000 | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 2.2 | | Restructure school day to provide 90 minute literacy block and 60 minute mathematics block in all elementary schools | Maurice Sykes | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3 | | Train 600 elementary teachers and 25 principals in developmental reading strategies and managing the literacy block | Maurice Sykes, Judy Aaronson | | $150,000 | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 2.4 | | Train 600 secondary teachers and 20 principals in reading and writing across the curriculum | Maurice Sykes, Judy Aaronson | | $150,000 | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 2.5 | | Restructure school calendar to provide adequate professional development time for all schools | Arlene Ackerman | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| 2.6 | | Provide training for school staffs on promotion gates and criteria | Judy Aaronson, Carol Johnson | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |

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| | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | COST | | PERFORMANCE MEASURE | | | PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | 1997 | | | | | | | 1998 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Jy | F | M | A | M | Jn |
| | | Develop programs with area universities to deliver teacher training in reading and mathematics including programs to serve language minority students | Maurice Sykes, Judy Aaronson | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
| | | Evaluate training programs based on student progress | Rich Wenning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| | *Literacy* | **Increase reading proficiency** | **Arlene Ackerman** | | | *Percent of students at or above basic proficiency* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 | | Implement and monitor 90 minute literacy block in all elementary schools | Kenneth Whitted, Principals | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 3.2 | | Assign Reading Resource and/or Reading Recovery teachers to every school with students scoring "Below Basic" on the Stanford 9 | Kenneth Whitted, Helena Jones, Ralph Neal | *$7,300,000* | *$438,000* | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3 | | Implement high performance reading models in five high schools for ninth grade students scoring "Below Basic" | Ralph Neal | | *$600,000* | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | ***Mathematics:*** | Increase mathematics proficiency | Arlene Ackerman | | | *Percent of students at or above basic proficiency* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 | | Implement and monitor 60 minute mathematics block in all elementary schools | Kenneth Whitted, principals | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 4.2 | | Assign mathematics resource teachers to each elementary school with students scoring "below basic" on Stanford 9 | Kenneth Whitted, Helena Jones, Ralph Neal | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| 4.3 | | Strengthen intermediate, middle and senior high school math programs to improve basic skills | Maurice Sykes | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 4.4 | | Develop and pilot Algebra I course examination to assure student readiness for higher level | Maurice Sykes | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 5 | ***Technology:*** | **Integrate technology into instruction** | **Charles Williams, Arlene Ackerman** | | | *Percent of schools with full technology capability* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1 | | Assure every school has capability for computer assisted instruction, on line services, internet access and CD ROM | Ulysses Keys | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 6 | ***Special Needs Students:*** | **Improve educational opportunities for special education and language minority students** | **Arlene Ackerman** | | | *Reduced number of out of district placements* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | **Deliver programs to special needs students not currently served** | **Jeff Myers, Rich Henning, Sandra Young** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.1 | | *Inclusion model in 20 schools*<br>*Program for learning disabled students in 3 high schools*<br>*Service to students with emotional disturbances*<br>*Improved program for LEP students* | | | | | | | | | | | ■<br>■<br>■<br>■ | | | | | | | | |
| 6.2 | | Plan and implement Child Find program | Jeff Myers, Bernadette Quinn | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | |
| 6.3 | | Implement improved Special Education organization structure | Jeff Myers, Lisa Morgan | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| 6.4 | | Implement improved management information system to improve delivery of service | Jeff Myers, Lisa Morgan | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 6.5 | | Reengineer assessment process to assure timelines of student evaluations are met | Jeff Myers, Michael Snipes | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |

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| | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | COST | | PERFORMANCE MEASURE | | | PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | 1997 | | | | | | | 1998 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Ja | F | M | A | M | Jn |
| 6.6 | | Implement special education strategic plan | Jeff Myers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 6.7 | | Implement first year recommendations of diversity task force | Kathleen Dion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 7 | *Alternative schools* | **Establish effective alternative school settings to reduce classroom disruptions, truancy and dropouts** | J W Berton, Jr | | | *# students served, reduced referrals to court system, reduced truancy, reduced dropout rate* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.1 | | Review status of current program | William Parnell, Margaret Labat | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.2 | | Develop District of Columbia Academy | William Parnell, Margaret Labat | $7,000,000 | $2,500,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 8 | *Facilities* | **Ensure alignment of academic and facility needs** | Arlene Ackerman, Charles Williams | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.1 | | Establish working groups on academics and facilities | Arlene Ackerman, Charles Williams | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |
| 9 | *Parent involvement* | **Improve parents' involvement in their children's education** | Arlene Ackerman | | | *Percentage of contracts signed, attendance at parent/teacher meetings* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9.1 | | Publicize and disseminate new "parent contract" outlining roles and responsibilities of parents and schools | Diane Powell, Kenneth Whitted, Helena Jones, Ralph Neal | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
| 9.2 | | Provide parents with information on school performance targets/results | Maurice Sykes, Kenneth Whitted, Helena Jones, Ralph Neal | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | | | | |
| 9.3 | | Implement 16 new parent resource centers in the targeted assistance schools | Maurice Sykes, Principals | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 9.4 | | Conduct parent literacy workshops on early literacy | Diane Powell | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 9.5 | | Conduct individual parent teacher meetings three times per year for kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2 | Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Teachers | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | ■ | | | ■ | |
| 9.6 | | Conduct parent/teacher conferences/meetings on SAT 9 scores | Carol Johnson, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, Teachers | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | |
| 9.7 | | Conduct hearing screening for all kindergarten students | Maurice Sykes | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | |
| 10 | *Safety and Security* | **Improve safety and security in schools** | Charles Williams | | | *Reduction in number of incidents* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10.1 | | Implement Automated Incident Reporting System (AIRS) | Pat Fiel, Charles Williams | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| 10.2 | | Train security personnel on use of AIRS data for continuous improvement of security operations | Pat Fiel, Charles Williams | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | |
| 10.3 | | Expand and train security force to provide more skilled security personnel | Pat Fiel, Charles Williams | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |

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| | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | COST | | PERFORMANCE MEASURE | | | PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | 1997 | | | | | | | 1998 | | | | | |
| | | | | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Ja | F | M | A | M | Jn |
| 9.4 | | Upgrade existing security technology | Pat Fuel, Charles Williams | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |

## GOAL II: ENSURE QUALITY SCHOOL STAFF

| | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Ja | F | M | A | M | Jn |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ***Qualified Teachers:*** | **Ensure that all teachers are qualified to teach in their subject areas** | **Arlene Ackerman** | | | *% of teachers certified in subject area or with alternative certification* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | Develop comprehensive teacher force profile, including licensure status | Shelia Graves, Yvonne Holt | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| | | Establish rigorous standards for hiring all teachers | Maurice Sykes, Yvonne Holt | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| | | Align certification with new standards | Maurice Sykes, Yvonne Holt | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| 1 | | Revise and strengthen alternative certification process for qualified individuals lacking traditional teaching credentials | Shelia Graves, Yvonne Holt | $50,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 9.5 | | Identify teachers hired under the One Year License and advise of policy and deadlines | Shelia Graves, Yvonne Holt | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | |
| 9.6 | | Facilitate training for teachers hired under the One Year License in critical need areas in order to meet licensure requirements | James Amich, Shelia Graves, Yvonne Holt | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 9.7 | | Increase number of teachers meeting National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification standards | Yvonne Holt, James Amich | | $30,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 9.8 | | Recruit new teachers, with emphasis on strong content knowledge and skill in teaching diverse student body | Shelia Graves | $150,000 | $75,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 9.9 | | Develop incentives to attract strong teachers to schools where they are most needed | Shelia Graves | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
| 9.10 | | Provide release time and require new teachers to attend New Teachers Seminar | Kenneth Whitted, Helena Jones, Ralph Neal and principals | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| 9.11 | | Assign mentor teachers to new teachers | Principals | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 12 | | Improve qualifications, training and pay of substitute teachers | Shelia Graves | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| 13 | | Provide content-based training sessions for substitute teachers | James Amich | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| 14 | | Ensure substitute coverage where needed in schools | Shelia Graves, Kenneth Whitted, Helena Jones, Ralph Neal and principals | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |

| | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Ja | F | M | A | M | Jn |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ***Qualified Principals:*** | **Develop corps of school leaders with skills to manage instructional and fiscal autonomy.** | **J.W. Becton, Jr.** | | $ 878,000 | *High performance in school site management* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | Implement one year appointments | J.W. Becton, Jr., Arlene Ackerman | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 2 | | Train all principals in skills needed for instructional leadership in standards based system | Maurice Sykes | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 3 | | Train principals in school management issues, including expanded budget authority and managing a diverse workforce | Arlene Ackerman, Ed Stephenson, Bettye Topps | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |

| | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | COST | | PERFORMANCE MEASURE | | | PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | 1997 | | | | | | | 1998 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Ja | F | M | A | M | Jn |
| 1.4 | | Conduct national search to fill school leadership vacancies | Shelia Graves | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |

## GOAL III: INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

| | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Ja | F | M | A | M | Jn |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | ***System Accountability:*** | **Establish a results based system of accountability with goals stated in terms of student outcomes and customer satisfaction** | **Richard Wenning** | | | *Accountability system developed and implemented* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.1 | | Conduct annual survey of students, school staff, and parents, and report results | **Brenda Dunson, Richard Wenning** | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.2 | | Evaluate policies and procedures related to truancy and improve as appropriate | **Brenda Dunson, William Parnell** | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | |
| 1.1.3 | | Evaluate policies and procedures related to enrollment and attendance and improve as appropriate | **Brenda Dunson, Richard Wenning** | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| 1.1.4 | | Communicate policies and procedures to the families of DCPS students in an understandable maner | **Loretta Hardge, Kathleen Hom** | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| 1.4 | ***Central Office Accountability:*** | **Hold central office accountable for meeting system wide performance targets** | **Richard Wenning** | | | *Performance measures developed and implemented by 10/31/97* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.4.1 | | Develop performance measures and targets for all central office functions | **Richard Wenning, Robert Donahue** | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |
| 1.4.2 | | Develop systemwide performance targets for schools | **Arlene Ackerman, Assistant Superintendents** | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3 | | Review LSRT plans to ensure compliance with city wide standards and goals for school performance | **Assistant Superintendents** | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | |
| 1.5 | ***School Building Accountability:*** | **Establish clear incentives for staff related to student outcomes; reward school for meeting performance targets, put schools on notice for lack of progress, establish serious consequences for declining performance** | **Arlene Ackerman** | | | *Increase the number of schools meeting or exceeding performance targets* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1 | | Identify schools not meeting performance targets | **Brenda Dunson** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 5.2 | | Publish school by school performance reports | **Brenda Dunson** | | *$50,000* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 1 | | Implement probation/assistance period for underperforming schools | **Arlene Ackerman, Maurice Sykes** | *$990,000* | *$150,000* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 1 | | Develop policy requiring low performing schools to implement research based whole school designs | **Arlene Ackerman, Maurice Sykes** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 2 | | Review guidelines for the establishment of LSRTs to ensure fairness and full participation by parents and teachers in LSRT nominations, elections and decisions | **Arlene Ackerman, Brenda Dunson** | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | Develop policy to reconstitute chronically failing schools | **Arlene Ackerman, Maurice Sykes** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | |
| | ***Principal Accountability:*** | **Hold principals accountable for school performance** | **J W Becton, Jr** | | | *Principal retention reflects performance against targets* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| D | OBJECTIV | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | COST |  | PERFORMANCE MEASURE |  |  | PERIOD OF PE... RMANCE |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | 1997 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 1998 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Ja | F | M | A | M | Jn |
| 20.4 |  | Provide training for LSRT's at identified schools | Arlene Ackerman, Ed Stephenson, Sheila Graves, Charles Williams |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |
| 20.5 |  | Evaluate implementation of Enterprise Schools, school within school charters and LSRT's to determine how school site capability has been strengthened | Arlene Ackerman |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |
| 20.6 |  | Establish market based service purchasing system with DCPS as one vendor among many | Ed Stephenson, Charles Williams |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |
| 21 | *Charter Schools* | **Encourage charter schools with diverse education programs and missions that leverage change within the school system. Provide administrative stewardship for growth of charter schools** | Richard Wenning | $150,000 |  | *Results of customer survey, student performance measures and financial audits* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21.1 |  | Facilitate the charter application process to ensure compliance with federal legislation | Richard Wenning |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21.2 |  | Assist and review charter school development and operations | Richard Wenning |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |
| 21.3 |  | Provide assistance to charter schools seeking facilities | Charles Williams, Suzanne Conrad |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |
| 21.4 |  | Administer start up and formula grants | Richard Wenning |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  | Review decisions by chartering authorities to ensure that approval process met state standards | Emergency Board of Trustees |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ | ■ |  |  | ■ | ■ |  |  |
|  | *Parental Choice* | **Expand parental choice among schools** | J.W. Becton, Jr. |  |  | *District-wide open enrollment policy developed for implementation* |  | Sep 98 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 |  | Evaluate current student enrollment and out of boundary transfer practices; determine if equitable | Brenda Dunson, Richard Wenning |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  | Develop equitable policy that maximizes parent's ability to choose which school their child will attend; explore a lottery system and redesigned boundaries | Brenda Dunson, Richard Wenning |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  | Incorporate parent choice decisions into school system incentive structures | Brenda Dunson, Richard Wenning |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ■ |  |  |  |  |  |

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| # | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | COST | | PERFORMANCE MEASURE | | | PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | 1997 | | | | | | | 1998 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Ja | F | M | A | M | Jn |
| 16.1 | | Design new principal evaluation and contract process based on student outcomes and management indicators including financial management, staff assignments and LSRT/parent relationships | Arlene Ackerman, Sheila Graves | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | ***Teacher Accountability:*** | **Hold teachers accountable for student performance** | Arlene Ackerman | | | *Successful teachers retained and paid well, unsuccessful separated* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17.1 | | Design new teacher evaluation process based on student outcomes | Arlene Ackerman | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | ***Student Accountability*** | **End social promotions** | Arlene Ackerman | | | *Decreased inappropriate promotions, student mastery of grade level materials* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18.1 | | Establish, publish and disseminate criteria for promotion gates at grades 3 and 8 | Arlene Ackerman, Maurice Sykes, Judy Aaronson | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| 18.2 | | Conduct school and community workshops on the new promotion gates | Kenneth Whitted, Helena Jones, Ralph Neal | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
| 18.3 | | Implement intervention strategies (e.g. Saturday Academies, tutorials, etc.) for students not meeting promotion criteria | Maurice Sykes | | $2,500,000 | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 18.4 | | Provide strict enforcement of discipline policy | Kenneth Whitted, Helena Jones, Ralph Neal | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 18.5 | | Provide for the special needs of Special Education, Non English Proficient and Limited English Proficient students | Jeff Myers, Jim Ruff | $5,000,000 | $2,000,000 | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |

## GOAL IV: PROMOTE SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING, DECENTRALIZATION, AND PARENTAL CHOICE

| # | OBJECTIVE | CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION STEP | RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) | PS | OTPS | Measure | Baseline 6/97 | Expected 6/98 | Jn | Jl | A | S | O | N | D | Ja | F | M | A | M | Jn |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | ***School Restructuring:*** | **Increase the number of schools restructuring through adoption of research based whole school designs** | Arlene Ackerman | | | *Number of schools implementing designs* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19.1 | | Hold Options Fair of research based school designs | James Amorh | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | |
| 19.2 | | Complete selections by schools staffs and begin redesign training | James Amorh, James Ruff, Assistant Superintendents, principals | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 19.3 | | Implement waiver package freeing redesigned schools from most central authority | Arlene Ackerman | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | |
| 20 | ***Decentralization:*** | **Decentralize responsibility, resources and authority to the school level** | J.W. Becton, Jr. | | | *Policy and procedures developed for implementation* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20.1 | | Evaluate what functions are currently centralized and decentralized, benchmark against decentralized systems | Richard Wenning | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| 20.2 | | Establish clear lines of authority, redesign central office to greatly thin out the line, those not in line will be in support services, principals only responsible to line staff | William Tidball, Richard Wenning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| 20.3 | | Develop policies and procedures to get 85% of DCPS budget to pilot schools and give great discretion over use including transfer of funds among line items and decide on staffing patterns, include share of central office support services | Ed Stephenson, Richard Wenning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |

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